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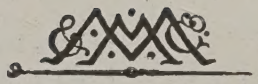
HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

IN

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AND RUTLAND



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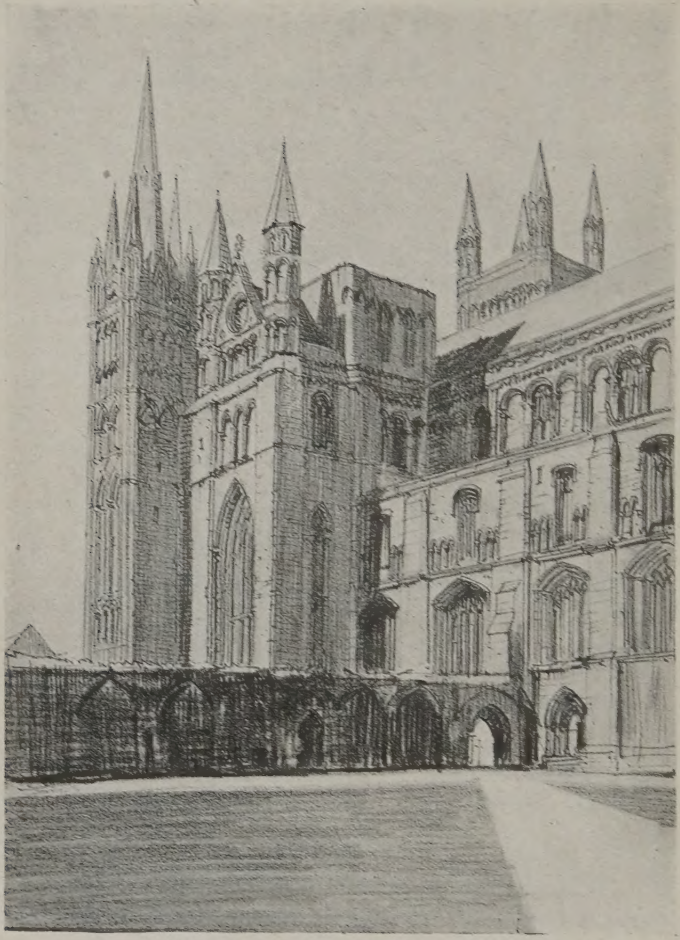

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Highways and Byways

IN

Northamptonshire and Rutland

BY HERBERT A. EVANS

AUTHOR OF "HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN OXFORD AND THE COTSWOLDS"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
FREDERICK L. GRIGGS

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PREFACE

All lovers of Northamptonshire must unite in lamenting the loss of that accomplished scholar, the Rev. R. M. Serjeantson, rector of St. Peter's, Northampton, and one of the editors of the *Victoria County History* of the county. In the historical and architectural knowledge of his adopted county (he was a Shropshire man by birth) he had few rivals, and had he lived these pages were to have had the benefit of his revision. The loss, however, has not been without compensation, and I have to express my gratitude to Mrs. Marcon (Miss Alice Dryden, editor of *Memorials of Old Northamptonshire*), who volunteered to read through the proofs. They could not have been in better hands, and to her I am indebted for many valuable suggestions. I must also express my thanks to Mr. Frederick Bostock, of Northampton, with whom the idea of the book originated, and who has continued to take a kindly interest in its progress.

As I write a brighter day seems to be dawning for England, and the time is coming when one and all will have to eschew the evil and choose the good; the errors of the past must be swept away, but among the good things that shall survive let us pray that not the least may be the love of the English countryside and the old country life.

H. A. Evans.

September, 1918.

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HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS
IN
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
AND
RUTLAND

CHAPTER I

NORTHAMPTON

What dull men are those that tarry at home,
When abroad they might wantonly rome,
And gain such experience, and spy too
Such Countreys, and Wonders as I do.—*Cowley.*

"HIGHWAYS and byways in the shires? No, thank you; my heart is in the Highlands, and I am off over the Border by the night express. The shires! Why the horses are all out at grass, and the dogs . . . . Think better of it and come with me. No? Well, good bye; hope you'll have a good time, but it won't suit me . . . . , and, by the way, don't forget how the review man grumbled about those 'tiresome topographical details.'" With this Parthian shot exit our romantic friend, and I can only pray that none of my readers will wish they had gone with him.

For of mountain, moor, and fell they will have none; what I can promise them is a country that can claim its full share of those more homelike scenes which make this England of ours so dear to the heart of its sons—hill and vale, meadow and tilth, woodland and stream, iron-stone walls and yellow-stone

roofs, noble churches, ancestral parks, and venerable halls. And not seldom we shall come upon places associated with great events in the history of Church or State ; here, to name but a few examples, came to a crisis the quarrel between the second Henry and his Chancellor, here the long-drawn fortunes of the Scottish Queen came to their mournful close, here the spirit of the Puritan found one of its earliest and most stalwart champions, here the great November Plot was hatched, here was fought the crucial struggle of the great Civil War, and here the captive King, passing from one gaoler to another, set out upon those fatal journeyings that were to end before the windows of Whitehall.

At the outset, then, as strangers and pilgrims in this delectable land, this shire of North Hampton, we will not loiter by the way, but will pay our homage where it is due—to its county town. Now if all roads do not lead to Northampton, as the proverb says they do to a city of greater renown, yet there are many ways of getting to it, but for our present purpose I will assume that the wayfarer has followed the course of Watling Street from the south-east and has crossed the frontier at Stony Stratford, where this ancient trackway forded the Ouse. Another dozen miles along a good highway and at the summit of the hill, where the Queen's Cross stands, the town lies before him. Here he may pause to survey the confused medley of red brick dominated by factory chimneys and church towers rising from the opposite bank of the Nene. On his right are the wooded slopes of Delapré, sinking to the field where the Yorkist victory called after the town was won, and on his left Hunsbury Hill with its prehistoric site so ably described by the curator of the County Museum, and so abundantly illustrated by the relics under his charge. To the north his gaze will fail to penetrate the as yet unknown regions which he is destined to explore, so he may now descend to the bridge, and as he climbs the steep street beyond the clack, clack of the shoe factories and the hurrying to and fro of sturdy artisans of either sex make it impossible for him to forget that in the belief of the

Queen's Cross, Hardingstone.

citizens of Northampton there is nothing like leather. Ever since the seventeenth century the boots and shoes of Northampton have been famous far and wide, but now no longer is the

craft confined to the town; it has spread itself miles away into the surrounding district and every outgrown village from Rothwell to Rushden and from Brixworth to Thrapston, with its many-windowed factories and its endless terraces of red brick and blue slate, bears witness to the triumph of the machine-made shoe.

But, I take it, our business on this occasion is not with the social and economic position of the town, and I will therefore plunge at once into matters more germane. The Nene (apparently you may pronounce the name "Neen" or "Nen" at your pleasure) reaches the town from the west, but near the bridge which we have just crossed it is joined by a northern affluent, which, with the precedent of the Tyne in our eye, we may term the North Nene, to distinguish it from its southern sister. The South Nene formed the defences of the mediæval town on the south; but, like mediæval London, its other three sides were defended by a wall, while the castle stood, not like the Tower of London on the east, but between the North Nene and the western walls on the site now occupied by the L. and N. W. goods yard. Further west still was the Augustinian abbey of St. James, and just outside the walls on the north-west was the Cluniac priory of St. Andrew. Lastly, across the South Nene on the ground already indicated stood the abbey of Delapré tenanted by Cluniac nuns. The presence of these three great foundations was felt far and wide throughout the county from the twelfth century down to the sixteenth, but when the last Prior of St. Andrew's became the first Dean of Peterborough their reign was over, and their buildings, like their possessors, had but short shrift. As far as I know, the only remnant of a conventual building now existing within the liberties is a portion of St. John's Hospital in Bridge Street, a house founded by an archdeacon of Northampton about 1140 for a brotherhood devoted to the care of the poor and needy. The building itself has now passed into the hands of the Catholics, but the foundation has taken a new lease of life at Weston Favell, not far away, as a convalescent hospital.

A busy railway yard is not a very attractive field for antiquarian speculation, but the Castle Station, with which most visitors to Northampton have had to become acquainted, shall justify its name. The earldom of Northampton was held for three generations (*c.* 1090–1184) by the great Norman family of Senlis or St. Liz, and Earl Simon I., for they all three bore that name, founded the castle, the priory of St. Andrew and

St. John's Hospital, Northampton.

in all probability the church of the Holy Sepulchre as well. Simon II. was the founder of Delapré Abbey, and Simon III., so it is conjectured, of the church of St. Peter.

The castle, if Earl Simon followed the fashion of his time, consisted at first of a mound of moderate height supporting a tower of wood, afterwards replaced by stone, and an adjacent court or bailey. These works were defended on three sides by

a ditch and on the fourth, or west, by the North Nene. But the founder did not long remain in independent possession of his fortress. Early in the twelfth century it had passed into the hands of the King, and a royal castle it remained till it was sold by Charles I. in 1629. Not that our Sovereigns used it as a residence all that time; the last to do so was Richard II., and we hear of the usual "houses" within its precincts, the chief being the great hall, with a large stained glass window over the screens at its lower end representing the parable of Dives and Lazarus. Later on, being no longer wanted for defence, it was employed, like several other English castles, as a prison, and by the time of Elizabeth it was already in ruins. At the Restoration of Charles II., its remains shared the general demolition of the fortifications of the town. The subsequent history of the site may be told in a few words. In 1852 the L. and N. W. R. purchased a small part of it in order to build a station for their Market Harborough branch. At this time, their principal station was in Bridge Street, but in 1876 they purchased the rest of the site, and proceeded with the present extensive station. Three years later there was still standing a small portion of the curtain walls, but, in spite of a petition presented by the whole county, this was destroyed, and the only fragment of the structure now to be seen is a postern built up into the boundary wall of the yard on the left of the visitor as he walks up the hill.

The most famous scene in the history of the castle—indeed, the only one of which an account has come down to us in any detail—is the trial and condemnation of Archbishop Becket at the Great Council held in the autumn of 1164. It is an oft-told tale. The chroniclers, "religious" by profession, are of course on the side of the Saint, and we have no contemporary writer on the side of the King to give us the other side of the story, which is as follows[1]: On an October evening the Archbishop and his retinue arrived at St. Andrew's priory.

[1] Of modern accounts the most graphic is that of Froude, *Short Studies*, vol. iv., pp. 60–71.

For two or three days he excused himself on the plea of sickness from appearing before the Council, which was assembled at the castle in the chambers opening from the upper end of the great hall, but on the 13th, after celebrating the Mass of St. Stephen, which contained the words of the psalmist, "the Kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed," he rode down to the castle, and holding his archiepiscopal cross in his hand, he strode up the hall into the apartment in which the bishops were sitting. A summons to appear before the King and his barons was met by an appeal to the judgment of the Pope, and on an attempt being made to arrest him he flung out of the chamber, and passing down the crowded hall amidst shouts of "Traitor, traitor, await thy sentence,"[1] he mounted his palfrey unopposed and rode back to the priory. That evening he summoned a number of poor folk to share his supper, and at dead of night, disguised as a monk and with only three attendants, he escaped by the north gate of the town to Lincoln, whence he made his way without molestation to Sandwich and so across the water to Flanders.

Northampton is now a substantially built town, but for several centuries the houses were mostly of timber or even of wattle and daub, roofed with thatch. It seems, however, to have escaped a general conflagration till the time of Charles II., when the register of All Saints' parish contains the following entry under the year 1675:

> While the world lasts remember September the 20th, a dreadful fire, it consumed to ashes in a few hours 3-parts of our Town and Chief Church.

Like the great fire of London a few years earlier, if it had only been more discriminating it would have proved a blessing in disguise; but, as the town-clerk of the day records, "the wind was very strong to blow y^e^ fire on but it was God who blew y^e^ bellows," and All Saints' fared no better than

[1] Quo progrederis, proditor; expecta et audi judicium tuum.

St. Paul's. All disasters of the kind originate in trifling accidents, and this one was no exception. According to the same authority, a poor woman in a narrow lane near the castle "was carrying a few live coales in a fire shovell from her neighbours house to her own in y^e^ lane to warme her dinner," when the gale blew some of them on to the thatch, and the fire spread eastwards as far as St. Giles's church, consuming everything in its path. Among the buildings which escaped were St. Peter's church and the fine sixteenth century house a little way to the east of it—then the mansion of the Hesilrige family.[1] Though it was broad daylight the conflagration was visible many miles away into the country, and among the first to come to the rescue was the third Earl of Northampton from Castle Ashby, seven or eight miles away to the east. Under his auspices the fire was overcome, a relief fund was at once started and the rebuilding of the town was undertaken with as little delay as possible.

To-day the great monument of the fire is the church of All Saints, at once a notable example of its style and a striking contrast to the other churches of the town and of the county. Of the larger church which it replaced nothing remains but the tower[2] and a small crypt. Indeed, the present church is so much smaller that it fills little more than the space occupied by the chancel of the former one, and the tower, once central, now stands at the west end. Along the whole length of the west front runs the fine portico on the cornice of which you may read how King Charles II. gave a thousand "tun" of timber[3] toward the rebuilding of this church and to this town. What, therefore, can be more fitting than that the pediment should be

[1] It has recently been purchased for a ladies' county club. These Hesilriges were a cadet branch of Heselrige of Noseley in Leicestershire, the most famous member of which is Sir Arthur Hesilrige (or Hazelrig), the parliamentarian cavalry officer, and one of the "five members."

[2] The cupola with its vane was added in 1704.

[3] There was at this time a plentiful supply of timber to be had at no great distance in the royal forests of Whittlewood and Salcey.

surmounted by a statue of his late Majesty, attired though he be in the garb of ancient Rome ?

The most remarkable feature of the interior is the fine seventeenth century roof culminating in its dome. Before the alterations of 1865 the side galleries projected as far as the pillars, but they were then set back as we now see them. This was probably an improvement, but the same cannot be said of the destruction of the oaken screen of the chancel, which the Gothic mania of that time could not tolerate ; its pilasters and pediment decorated with the royal arms are now worked up into the doorways leading into the church from the portico. At this time, too, a massive pulpit of the three-decker order with an elaborate sounding board surmounted by eagles stood in the centre of the nave in front of the chancel screen ; and one might suppose that in a galleried church like this it would have been enough to move it to one side ; but no, the sentence of banishment was pronounced against it, and the probability is it has long ago been broken up by some enterprising cabinet-maker. The mayor's seat of 1680 was, however, spared, and finally, about 1885, the chancel arch was reshaped and flanked on either side by coupled columns to match the rest, and the unattractive east window was concealed by the present carved reredos.

As for old All Saints', it was apparently a cruciform church—"larger than many of our cathedrals," as one who remembered it before its destruction described it, with a nave and aisles extending 20 feet westward from the tower. On the other hand, the present church extends 10 feet beyond its predecessor eastwards. That the oldest church of all was a Norman one has been inferred from the presence of unmistakable masonry of that period in the core of the tower piers, while other available evidence points to its having been rebuilt in the thirteenth century, and to its having received later alterations and additions till it became mainly a building in the Decorated style. Thus the lower stage of the tower is Early English, while the upper as far as the cornice is Decorated.

It is well known that Northampton, like Banbury, was a great

stronghold of the Puritans, and the late rector of St. Peter's (R.M. Serjeantson) considers it probable that the once famous Puritan institution of "Prophesyings"[1] originated in this church of All Saints. There is no doubt that religious reformers, as far back as the Lollards, always had a following here. Thus the mayor in 1392, one John Fox, was, it seems, a great champion of the movement. In this year a woolman of the town, Richard Stormesworth to wit, lodged a complaint against him before the King and Council. Not only had he introduced a certain pseudo-archdeacon, then living "deliciously in y^e^ House of St. Andrew," into the pulpit of the town church "with a cap on, as if he had been a Doctor or Master of Divinity," but he had also caused another heretic, a mere country parson, to preach there, "who assended y^e^ Pulpit w^n^ y^e^ Viccar of y^e^ Church, after the offertory, went to y^e^ Altar to sing his Mass: whom y^e^ s^d^ Mai^r^ followed and took by y^e^ back of his vestment to cause him to cease till y^e^ s^d^ Preacher had preach'd, and y^e^ Vicar answer'd *non possum*. The s^d^ Parson preached there his Lollardy in y^e^ afternoon too, to whom the s^d^ Rich^d^ Stormesworth cryed, *Tu autem, Tu autem*, to cause him to hold his peace: commanding him to come down, upon w^ch^ an uproar ensued and y^t^ y^e^ s^d^ Rich^d^ was in danger of his life."

In the Civil War, when the town was in the hands of the Parliament, the same pulpit must often have been filled by innovators of a far more violent type than the sybaritic pseudo-

[1] So called with reference to 1 Cor. xiv. 26–33. Bacon approved of this practice as a good method of training preachers: "The ministers within a precinct did meet upon a week-day in some principal town, where there was some ancient grave minister that was president, and an auditory admitted of gentlemen, or other persons of leisure. Then every minister successively, beginning with the youngest, did handle one and the same part of Scripture, spending severally some quarter of an hour or better and in the whole some two hours; and so . . . . the president giving a text for the next meeting, the assembly was dissolved." *Certain considerations touching the better pacification and edification of the Church of England.*

archdeacon; but I have not met with any stories of "brawling" within the walls of the edifice in those days, although in the

Cromwell House, Northampton.

churchyard is buried a noted Leveller, Captain William Thompson, who after mutinying at Banbury marched off under his sea-green colours to Burford (May, 1649), where his brother

and two other of his confederates were shot.[1] Captain William with a handful of other mutineers made his escape to Northampton, whence after breaking open the gaol and liberating three of his friends, not to mention helping himself to the public money at the excise office, he continued his mad career towards Wellingborough, but in Sywell wood he was brought to bay, and after a desperate resistance slain.[2]

To return to the church, the comparatively large size of the chancel as it existed before the fire is probably due to the number of stipendiary priests attached to the church—no fewer than sixteen. These were the chaplains of those gilds or fraternities which were universal in mediæval times, and combined the functions of our church societies and benefit clubs. These priests, who had for some time lived together, were in 1460 incorporated into a college, "to implead and be impleaded under the title of The Wardens and Fellows of the College of All Saints, in the town of Northampton." We shall come to other foundations of the kind in the course of our journeys.

Famous after the rebuilding of the church were the "bills of mortality" annually set forth by the parish clerk. So famous were they that they actually formed the basis of the tables issued by the various insurance companies[3] until the State system of registry was instituted. For how long they existed in MS. before 1736 I know not, but from that year to 1871, when they were discontinued, they were printed, and to give a flavour to this dry bill of fare, it became the custom to print with them a copy of suitable verses. Thereby hangs a tale. Some ten miles south-east of Northampton, across the Bucking-

[1] See *Highways and Byways in Oxford and the Cotswolds*, pp. 365–366.

[2] It has been conjectured that the bullet marks, still to be seen, on the west side of St. Sepulchre's tower were made by Thompson and his crew.

[3] It is said that the enormous death rate from consumption in those days at Northampton made the tables founded on these bills favourable to the insurer.

hamshire border resided a middle-aged gentleman of leisure, who had already acquired some reputation as a writer of scholarly verse. One November morning in the year 1787 he was informed that a stranger wished to speak with him ; but he shall tell the story in his own words :

" On Monday morning last, Sam brought me word that there was a man in the kitchen who desired to speak with me. I ordered him in. A plain, decent, elderly figure made its appearance, and being desired to sit, spoke as follows : ' Sir, I am clerk of the parish of All Saints, in Northampton ; brother of Mr. Cox the upholsterer. It is customary for the person in my office to annex to a bill of mortality, which he publishes at Christmas, a copy of verses. You would do me a great favour, sir, if you would furnish me with one.' To this I replied, ' Mr. Cox, you have several men of genius in your town, why have you not applied to some of them ? There is a namesake of yours in particular, Cox, the statuary, who, everybody knows, is a first-rate maker of verses. He surely is the man of all the world for your purpose.'—' Alas ! Sir, I have heretofore borrowed help from him, but he is a gentleman of so much reading, that the people of our town cannot understand him.' I confess to you, my dear, I felt all the force of the compliment implied in this speech, and was almost ready to answer, Perhaps, my good Friend, they may find me unintelligible too for the same reason. But on asking him whether he had walked over to Weston on purpose to implore the assistance of my Muse, and on his replying in the affirmative, I felt my mortified vanity a little consoled, and pitying the poor man's distress which appeared to be considerable, promised to supply him. The wagon has accordingly gone this day to Northampton loaded in part with my effusions in the mortuary style. A fig for poets who write epitaphs upon individuals ! I have written *one*, that serves *two hundred* persons." [1]

Half a dozen of these " effusions in the mortuary style " are printed in the author's Poetical Works, running from 1787 to

[1] Cowper to Lady Hesketh, Nov. 27, 1787.

1793, but the first and last stanzas of the first will perhaps be sample enough for most of my readers :

" While thirteen moons saw smoothly run
The Nen's barge-laden wave,
All these, life's rambling journey done,
Have found their home, the grave.

* * * *

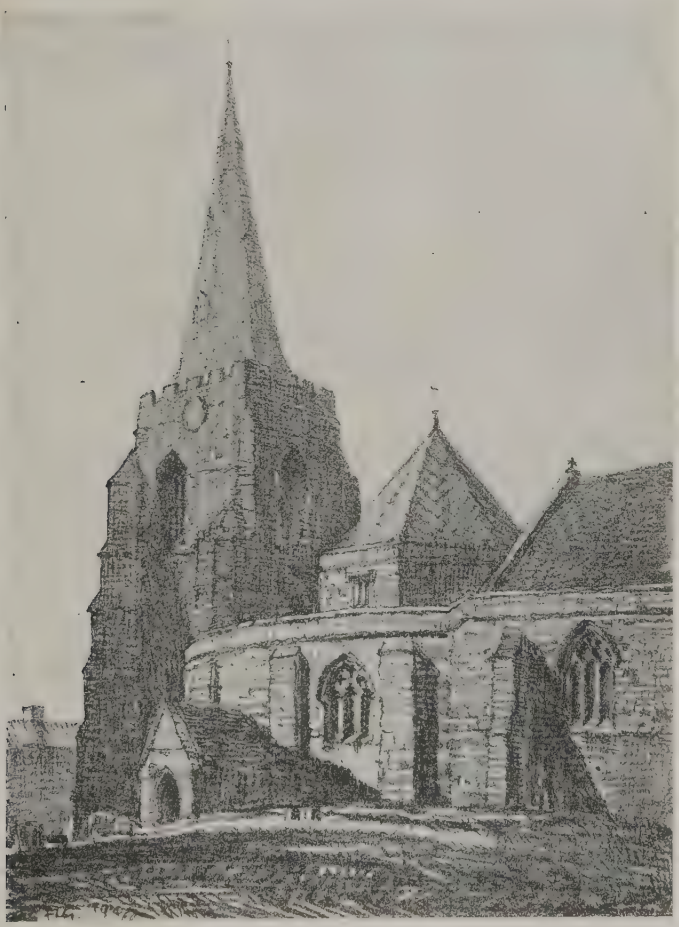
So prays your Clerk with all his heart
And, ere he quits the pen,
Begs *you* for once to take *his* part,
And answer all—Amen ! "

The church of the Holy Sepulchre, one of the five round churches still remaining in England, stands on the north side of the town not far from the site of St. Andrew's priory. It is now a building of many styles to which all the centuries from the twelfth to the nineteenth have each contributed its share. The circular part, or " round," is now provided with a steeple [1] on its west side, and with a nave and three aisles on its east ; but let us in imagination strip off all accretions, and a circular nave with a short apsidal chancel is all that will be left. Such was the church founded, as it may confidently be affirmed, by Earl Simon I. after his safe return from the first Crusade in 1099. Fresh from the church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, his first ambition would be to become founder of a church of the same pattern in his own town. And in his choice of a site it would seem that he was guided, not only by its proximity to his own residence, but also by the fact that it already had its sacred associations. For as you enter the Perpendicular south porch you may see an Anglo-Saxon sundial built into the wall on the right, the sole surviving fragment, it may be, of a still earlier church.

Of Earl Simon's building very little more than the wall of the round with its eight circular piers remains. As he saw it, these piers would support circular arches, and above them would be smaller arches of the same character opening into the tri-

[1] " Steeple " in this book = a tower crowned by a spire.

forium. Externally he would see two tiers of round-headed windows, the lower and larger tier lighting the ambulatory,



St. Sepulchre's Church, Northampton.

the upper and smaller the triforium. Of all these windows only one in the lower tier and two in the upper are still unblocked.

Above the sloping roof of the triforium he would see an eight-windowed clerestory crowned by a conical roof. The entrance would be on the west, where the steeple now stands.

We may now briefly indicate the steps by which the church assumed its present appearance. A Norman corbel-table, to be seen on the outer sides of the present nave, shows that these walls were once external; they were, in fact, the walls of the original chancel. In the latter part of the twelfth century the north wall was cut through and a north aisle added, perhaps as memorial chapel to Archbishop Becket; in the next century a second aisle was built, north again of the first, and in the Decorated period a south aisle. The body of the church east of the round was now of about the same proportions as at present, but in the early Perpendicular period, 1375–1400, the round itself received alterations, which effected a considerable change in its appearance. The sloping roof and circular clerestory already postulated were removed and the inner wall of the round, including the two tiers of Norman arches, was taken down as far as the capitals of the great piers; the vaulted roof of the ambulatory went also, and the work of reconstruction began. The tall, pointed arches which we see to-day took the place of the Norman ones, and the walls above them were carried up to form the present octagonal lantern. Moreover, the triforium having vanished, the ambulatory was covered with a flat roof, the archways leading from the round into the body of the church were remodelled, and the tower and spire were erected at its western end.

In such order St. Sepulchre's remained for some two centuries and a half; then came the period of destruction and decay.[1] Suffice it to say here that in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the body of the church fell into disuse; its eastern end was lopped off so that there were only two arches left east of the round instead of five as at present, the tracery was torn from the windows, and the round itself was fitted up

[1] For the details see J. C. Cox and R. M. Serjeantson, *History of St. Sepulchre's Church, Northampton.*

for service with pulpit, pews, and gallery. It was not till 1859 that the rebuilding and reformation of the church were undertaken in memory of the second Marquess (tenth Earl) of Northampton, and the work, continued at intervals for twenty years, left the building as we see it to-day. The brass to Mr. George

St. Peter's Church, Northampton.

Coles (1640), with its "Mysterious Knott of Hand in Hand" which will be found in the round, has the distinction of being the only brass left in Northampton.

We may now return to the neighbourhood of the castle and visit St. Peter's, an unrivalled example of late Norman. Its richly decorated arcades and splendid tower arch make it the

most attractive church in Northampton. Founded in the latter half of the twelfth century, perhaps by Earl Simon III., it appears at the first glance to be as untouched as when it left the builder's hands, an impression which will, however, disappear on a closer examination ; it will then be evident that the aisle walls and the tower have been rebuilt at some subsequent period, and that the east end is a modern restoration.

Let us enter and look at the arcades—two long rows of arches of moderate height unbroken by chancel arch or any other structural division. In the nave, every other column is compound with four engaged shafts, while the intervening ones are simple, slender, and banded, thus producing a division into two double bays on either side with a single bay to the west of them —single because its other half is now swallowed up by the tower, from which the eastern sides of the dividing columns may be seen projecting and doing duty as responds. Thus were these splendid arcades mutilated, and as far as we can judge for no adequate reason. Granted that the tower had become unsafe and required rebuilding, yet why not rebuild it in its old position ten feet to the west and so clear of the arcades ? The belfry stage of the present tower points to the latter half of the sixteenth century, and its rebuilding therefore probably took place at that period. The elaborate arch, which is now built into the wall of the west face of the tower above the window, is supposed to have formed the recessed head of the doorway, but its orders are now in one plane and the innermost has disappeared.[1]

As for the chancel, it had three single bays with a sanctuary at the east end, but twelve feet of the latter had long vanished, and when the restoration of 1851 took place it was thought better to rebuild the east end altogether. Everything east of the arcades, including the ends of the aisles, is therefore of that date.

In the south-west corner of the nave is a bust to William Smith, " the Father of English Geology," who died at North-

[1] For details see R. M. Serjeantson's *History of St. Peter's Church, Northampton.*

ampton in 1839 while on a visit to his friend George Baker, the county historian. Baker's monument, a roll of manuscript in white marble, is close by. His history, a monument in itself, embraces most of the south and a portion of the west of the county; unfortunately, want of money prevented him from carrying it further. He died in 1851; his sister, who survived him ten years, was his indefatigable fellow-worker, and it was she who was the first to clear the carvings of the capitals of these arcades from their incrustations of lime-wash.

St. Giles's, near the east gate, was but a small church till the enlargement of the last century. Away from the influence of the castle and of the monks of St. Andrew's, it seems to have preceded All Saints' as the townsmen's church—in the churchyard took place the election of the mayor, and in the church itself were held the meetings of the corporation. Founded 1100–1120, by the end of the next century it had assumed the form which it kept down to recent times, for it was well out of the range of the fire of 1675. The chief event in its history was the fall of the central tower in 1613, which demolished a great part of the north arcade of the nave. Robert Sibthorpe, the Royalist preacher, afterwards vicar of Brackley, held the living at that time, and, as a tablet in the church records:

ROB. SIBTHORPES CARE
TO GODS TRVE FEARE
THIS DOWNEFALNE
CHVRCH GOT
HELPE TO REARE
1616

In the restoration of 1853–1855 the nave and aisles were lengthened by two bays, and an additional north aisle was built; the east and west tower arches were rebuilt, the nave and aisles new roofed, the windows and porches renewed, and the church reseated throughout. The restoration of the chancel, which was then untouched, came twenty years later. The most interesting object left in the church is the Gobion monu-

ment, now at the east end of the new north aisle—a fifteenth century table tomb of white alabaster. The sides are carved with niches, each containing a figure of an angel or a mourner. There is no effigy on the top, and an inscribed strip of brass which formerly ran round the edge has been torn off.[1]

In the Barons' War, Northampton, like Stamford seventy years afterwards, had an escape from the not unmixed blessing of becoming an university town. It seems that disturbances between town and gown had been followed by a secession of students from both Oxford and Cambridge to Northampton. The former, at the instance of King Henry, had already begun to return, when a parliament was summoned to meet at Oxford, and the accommodation in those days being of a limited nature, the men were sent down. Many of the undergraduates, thus forced into the ranks of the unemployed, joined the side of the Barons, and again made their way to Northampton, upon which town the Royal forces were now to be concentrated. Here, marshalled under a separate banner of their own, they did such good execution upon the assailants that when the King learnt who they were he swore he would have them all hanged. In a few days the town surrendered and Henry was only prevented from carrying out his threat by the remonstrances of his followers, who pointed out that many of the offenders belonged to some of the most influential families in the land, whose affections it would be imprudent to alienate. Shortly afterwards came the battle of Lewes, and Leicester issued writs in the King's name commanding the students to return to Oxford.

The part played by Northamptonshire in the Wars of the Roses was not a very prominent one, but Stamford and Peterborough were among the towns sacked by the Lancastrians on their march from York to London in 1461, and in the previous year they had been defeated in the battle of Northampton, fought, as we have already noted, in the meadow that lies be-

[1] Mr. Serjeantson's history of this church was the latest of his valuable studies on the history of the town.

tween the South Nene and the park of Delapré Abbey. It was in July that the Royal army, advancing from Coventry towards London, arrived at Northampton, while Warwick and the young Earl of March (afterwards Edward IV.) were approaching from the opposite direction. When they reached the top of Hardingstone hill they beheld the King's forces entrenched in the valley below them. Warwick at first attempted negotiation, but his overtures were abruptly rejected by the Duke of Buckingham, the first of the Staffords to hold that title. The Yorkists then charged down the hill, for the Royal artillery had been rendered useless by heavy rain and floods, and reinforced by Lord Grey of Ruthyn and his troop, who deserted to them at the critical moment, they made short work of their opponents. The fight was over in a brief half-hour, the Duke of Buckingham was slain, and the King himself a prisoner.

There is little else to detain the stranger in Northampton. You may look round Market Square, which on market days is studded with booths in the antique fashion, and is alive with busy bartering from morn till eve, and you will of course pay to the Museum and to the Public Library the honour they so well deserve. After a leisurely visit to these institutions you will start with me upon our travels with a sharpened appetite.

The Nene Valley, near Northampton.

CHAPTER II

GREAT BILLING—COGENHOE—CASTLE ASHBY—EASTON MAUDIT—EARLS BARTON—WILBY—WELLINGBOROUGH—FINEDON—IRTHLINGBOROUGH — STANWICK — RAUNDS — HIGHAM FERRERS — IRCHESTER

THE excursion down the Nene to Peterborough will take us some time. It abounds in places of interest, and we shall not scruple to diverge to the right or left as often as occasion requires. Of course, there is the railway with its frequent stations ; but, cyclists and pedestrians as we are, we shall not make much use of it.

Let us leave the town by the Wellingborough road. Within a mile we shall pass on our right Abington Park, once the home of Lady Barnard, Shakespeare's granddaughter, but now the property of the Corporation and a public pleasure ground. The house in which she lived and died is now a museum, and the little church in which she was buried is hard by. So on to Great Billing, where we quit the high road in order to cross to the further side of the Nene. On the west side of the village

is the Hall, with its spacious lawns sloping down to the queer eighteenth century looking church—such is the effect produced by the incongruous parapet and ornaments surmounting the nave and tower.[1] That they are intruders is plain enough, and it seems that they were brought from the old Hall pulled down in 1776, and possibly intended to compensate the church for the loss of its spire, which had been wrecked by lightning.

After strolling round the church, which lies high and commands a good view across the valley, we return to the village,

Billing Mill.

startled but not dismayed by a weather-beaten notice peering at us over the wall of the estate :

STEEL TRAPS
and Spring Guns
set on these Premises

Into what collection of curiosities these antiquated instruments of torture may have found their way I cannot say, but in any case we have no insidious designs on " these Premises,"

[1] " Here the church has not a house save the squire's in its vicinity, and is tucked away behind the plantations of the hall so that the stranger can hardly find it unless attracted thither by the sound of its bells. As a fact there were once cottages all about it, but a former lord of the manor diverted a road and got rid of the cottagers so as to increase the quiet and amenity of his abode." G. Baldwin Brown, *The Arts in Early England*, vol. i, p. 297.

and shall not, as did the heroine of *The Woodlanders*, meet with even a harmless adventure with a "STEEL TRAP."

We can now descend to the river by the main street of Billing or by a parallel road through Ecton, a mile further to the east. Ecton is remembered as the village from which sprang the family of America's statesman and man of science, Benjamin Franklin. From Ecton, Benjamin's father migrated to New England in good King Charles's golden days, while his uncle Thomas stayed at home and presented his native village with the chimes which after two hundred years are as tuneful as ever. His tomb may be seen in the churchyard, and his house, as all good Americans will wish to know, stood, so they say, where the village "stores" now are.

If we cross the Nene near Billing station we shall leave on our right one of those moated mounds without any bailey attached, which probably served as toot-hills or observation posts, and this one, known as Clifford Hill, would command the passage of the river. Having crossed the river and the railway, our first halt is at Cogenhoe (pronounced *Cookno*), situated, as the name implies,[1] on a rising knoll. There are some fine old farmhouses in the village, and many ugly modern villas, which look as if they had been transported from the suburbs of the town and felt exceedingly uncomfortable in their new situation. The church has a western tower, like many others in this part of the valley, but no spire. The Nene valley is surely unique in possessing so many fine spires in such a limited area, and lower down we shall find that the absence of a spire is the exception rather than the rule. There is nothing particularly striking about the exterior of this church, but the interior, though the chancel is too dark, is full of interest. The oldest part is the chancel, which belongs to the first half of the thirteenth century, but the south doorway seems to have belonged to a still earlier church. Now look at the south wall of the chancel; it has an arcade of three divisions containing lancets, and there is a similar one at the east end of the north

[1] Gucken, to spy, and Hoe, a hill; "Spion Kop," in fact.

side. Of the two other bays on this side, the central one has a double aumbry with a curious recess above it, probably an Easter sepulchre, and the western one opens into what was once a Lady Chapel of the early fourteenth century, but was in 1870 rebuilt as an organ chamber and vestry. At the east end is an arch of late thirteenth century date in which the nineteenth century restorers inserted, as was their wont,

Cogenhoe.

a triple lancet window to match the others. The nave and aisles are later than the chancel, and were probably built about 1280 by Nicholas de Cogenhoe, whose effigy is in the south aisle and whose family were lords of the manor from the reign of Henry II. to the end of that of Richard II. In the next century the aisles were widened and a clerestory added to the nave; then came the south porch, and finally, about 1450, the tower. The capitals of the nave piers are ornamented by grotesque heads,

and by coats of arms, among which that of the Cogenhoe family, a fess between three mascles, occurs four times. On the west side of the easternmost pier on the south side is the base of a niche for a saint, and in the south wall near the head of the effigy of Sir Nicholas is a small recess with an external opening now walled up, perhaps intended for an obit light.

In England, and perhaps now even in Wales, it must be very rare to find the lessons read out of a black-letter Bible. Here

Whiston.

Barker's Bible of 1617 (this copy was rebound 1649), after having been some time laid aside, is now in regular use. In Nahum i, 1, "The *book* of the vision of Nahum" is misprinted *hook*. Among the eighteenth century rectors of this church was Peter Whalley, the editor of Ben Jonson and of Bridges's "Northamptonshire."

On the right after leaving Cogenhoe is Whiston, pleasantly embowered on the hill side. The church was built in 1534 by

Anthony Catesby, a member of the Ashby St. Ledgers family, and is well worth visiting as an unspoilt example of late Perpendicular. So eastward for another mile, when we catch sight of the Marquess of Northampton's beautifully wooded park climbing the hillside. We are too close to the hill here to see the house, which stands at the top, commanding a splendid prospect to the north, so we will turn in at the lodge gate and ride up through the park and over the bridge which spans the lake, when a steep ascent will bring us right in front of the mansion. A castle once stood here (hence the name *Castle* Ashby) which in the first quarter of the fifteenth century passed by purchase into the hands of the family of Grey de Ruthyn; it was, however, no longer used as a residence and was allowed to decay, so that a hundred years later, when Leland saw it, it had become a mere "septum for bestes," and no vestige of it now remains except a stone-lined well beneath the terrace on which the present house stands. This is one of those splendid palaces which the new nobility were building in Elizabeth's reign, and of which Burleigh is the other notable example in this county. It was begun by Henry, first Lord Compton, in the eighties of the sixteenth century and finished by his son William, second Baron Compton and (in 1618) first Earl of Northampton: be it noted that a young noble who had doubled the fortunes of his family by running away with a Lord Mayor's daughter was well able to support the dignity of an earldom.[1]

When first built, the quadrangle was open to the south, but it was closed a few years later by cloisters with a gallery over them, the work of Inigo Jones. The attention of the most casual visitor cannot fail to be attracted by the open letters of the text which runs round the balustrading at the top of the

[1] For the Comptons and their earlier Warwickshire home the reader may refer to *Oxford and the Cotswolds*, pp. 125–131. Since that was written the surviving fragments of the Balliol window have been collected and placed in one of the south windows of the College chapel.

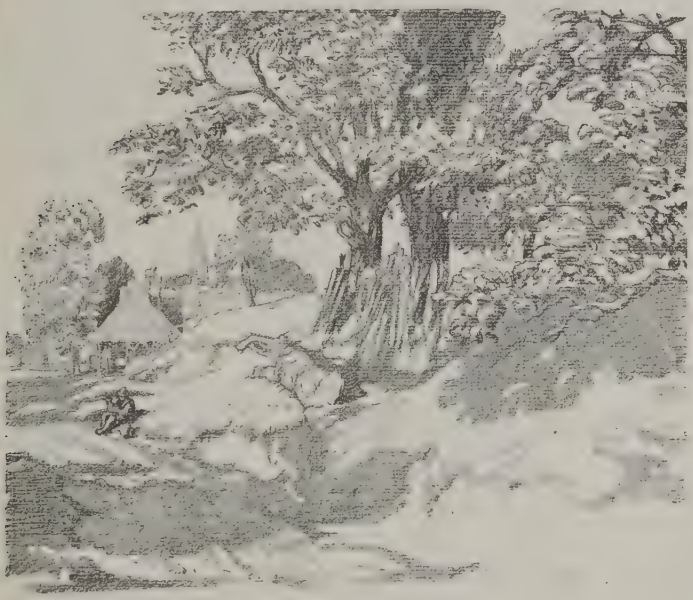
house: NISI DOMINVS ÆDIFICAVERIT DOMVM IN VANVM LABORAVERVNT QVI ÆDIFICANT EAM—a fashion repeated in the modern balustrades of the garden terraces.

The gardens and shrubberies lie to the south-east of the house, and bear ample witness to that love of trees and flowers which has been hereditary in the family for many generations. Under the fourth earl (1681–1727) the formal style prevailed, and four great avenues stretched from the house to the four points of the compass, but under the seventh and eighth earls (1758–1796) all but one were improved out of existence by the drastic innovations of Capability Brown. So matters remained without much disturbance till the middle of the last century, when the third marquess formed the terraces and laid out the flower beds much as we now see them. It was he, too, who brought from Rome the handsome iron work now worked up into the great gates at the head of the surviving avenue, which stretches three miles away till it loses itself in the glades of Yardley Chace, where, close to the Bedfordshire border, "Cowper's oak," that "shatter'd veteran, hollow-trunk'd, ... and with excoriate forks deform," still braves the elements.

The church, which adjoins the gardens, with its fine Norman doorway, is locked against us to-day. We must therefore be content to leave unseen the thirteenth century effigy of Sir David de Esseby, and the large brass to a former rector, William Ermyn (1401) habited in an embroidered cope. Nor need we delay unless for a snack at the village inn, but will steer through the park by the comfortable rectory and well kept home farm to Easton Maudit, once the home of Thomas Percy, the Percy of the immortal Reliques.

Percy was vicar here for nearly thirty years, and here the greater part of his literary work was done. At his vicarage he entertained some of the most eminent men of letters of his day, including Johnson, Goldsmith, and Shenstone. Unfortunately, no details of these visits have survived; for when Johnson was spending some weeks with the vicar in the summer

of 1764 his acquaintance with Boswell was in its early stages, and these "Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers" must needs be left to the imagination. We know, however, that it was to this vicarage that from Desborough some sixteen miles away



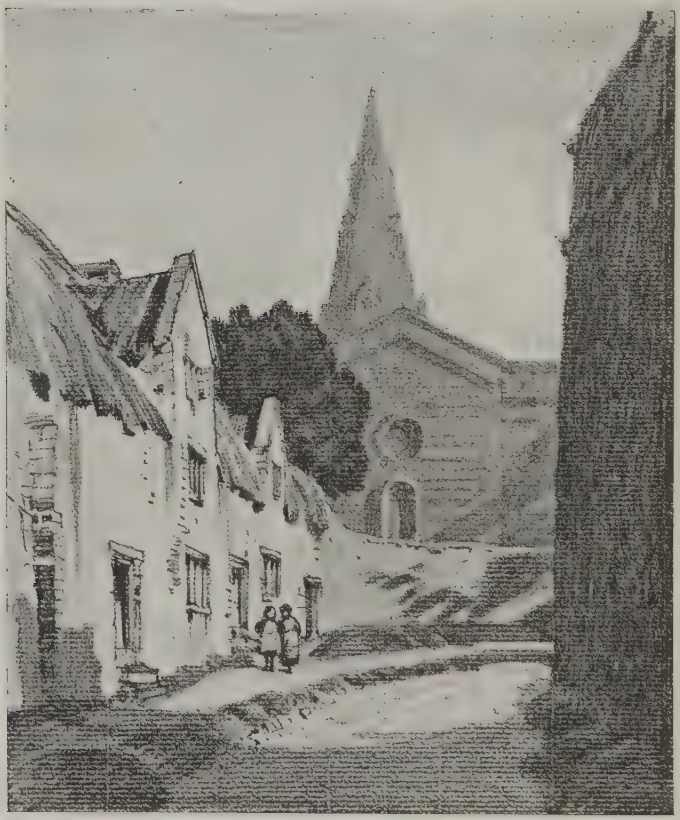
Easton Maudit.

to north he brought home his bride, Anne Guthridge, to whom he had addressed the well known invitation beginning

"O Nancy wilt thou go with me
Nor sigh to leave the flaunting town;
Can silent glens have charms for thee,
The lowly cot and russet gown?"

and that it was at this vicarage that he spent many a happy hour over the pages of the famous folio MS. happily rescued from the irreverent fingers of the Shropshire chambermaid, and long afterwards jealously guarded in the library of his descendants at Ecton.

As for the church, whose lofty spire has guided us hither from afar, the interest centres in the Yelverton monuments in the eastern chapel of the north aisle. These



Wollaston.

Yelvertons, a branch of a Norfolk family of that name, resided here for two centuries, the best known of them being Sir Henry Yelverton, James I.'s Attorney-General. The ancient title of Grey de Ruthyn came in and went out with a woman, and

during the eighteenth century they added to it the superior dignity of the earldom of Sussex. There is also a memorial tablet for Thomas Morton, bishop of Durham, who was turned out of his bishopric in the Great Rebellion and found a refuge here with the son and grandson of the Attorney-General. The story of his chance encounter with Sir Christopher Yelverton when on his journey to London, "to live a little while, and then die," and that of his exemplary virtues are set forth at length in Walker's *Sufferings of the Clergy*. He died at the age of 94 in the year preceding the Restoration.

The cyclist may if he pleases join the Wellingborough and Kettering road, a mile further on at Bozeat, but I am now going back across the Nene to Earls Barton with its famous tower, distinguished by a high authority [1] as "the most characteristic piece of Saxon work in the land." A stiffish climb from the valley lands me in the village, where, since the introduction of the shoemaking trade, the old style and the new jostle each other at every corner. The church, though not at the actual summit of the hill, commands a wide prospect southwards to Castle Ashby and the woods of Yardley Chace, but before proceeding further I must introduce the reader to a controversy which in these latter days has inevitably made the spot a battle ground for the antiquaries.

Close behind the church on the north are the remains of one of those moated mounds [2] of which we have already noted an example without a bailey at Clifford Hill, but in this instance the remains of one can clearly be seen in the field still further to the north. Now those who believe that these earthworks were thrown up in pre-Norman times profess to find here a powerful argument. Here, they urge, is the ninth or tenth century mound encompassed by its ditch, and here we have the later church, or at any rate a portion of it, *within the area occupied*

[1] G. Baldwin Brown, *The Arts in Early England*, vol. ii. p. 185.

[2] The southern portion is almost destroyed. The mound is known as Berry Mound and the adjoining field as Berry field—a survival of the *burh* or *burg*.

Earls Barton.

by the northern arc of this ditch. What then can be more evident than that the fortress was there before the church? No, reply the champions of the opposite theory, this is no exception to the rule that earthworks of this class are the work, not of the Saxons, but of the Normans; true the church does stand close to the mound, and partly within the area occupied by the ditch, but closer inspection will show that it is only the north aisle

Fig. 4

Mears Ashby.

that is the trespasser, and that the original church was aisleless, and therefore stood clear of the ditch afterwards dug to the north of it.

It is now generally admitted that the weight of the evidence preponderates in favour of the latter theory, but in this instance at any rate, the question of the age of the tower will remain unaffected by either. This seems to belong to the latter part

of the tenth century, preserving as it does the Romanesque traditions.[1] The material used is rubble covered with plaster and relieved by stone strips. The quoins fashioned in long and short work and the balusters between the lights in the uppermost of the four stages are among the most characteristic features of this period. In the second stage from the bottom

Road near Mears Ashby.

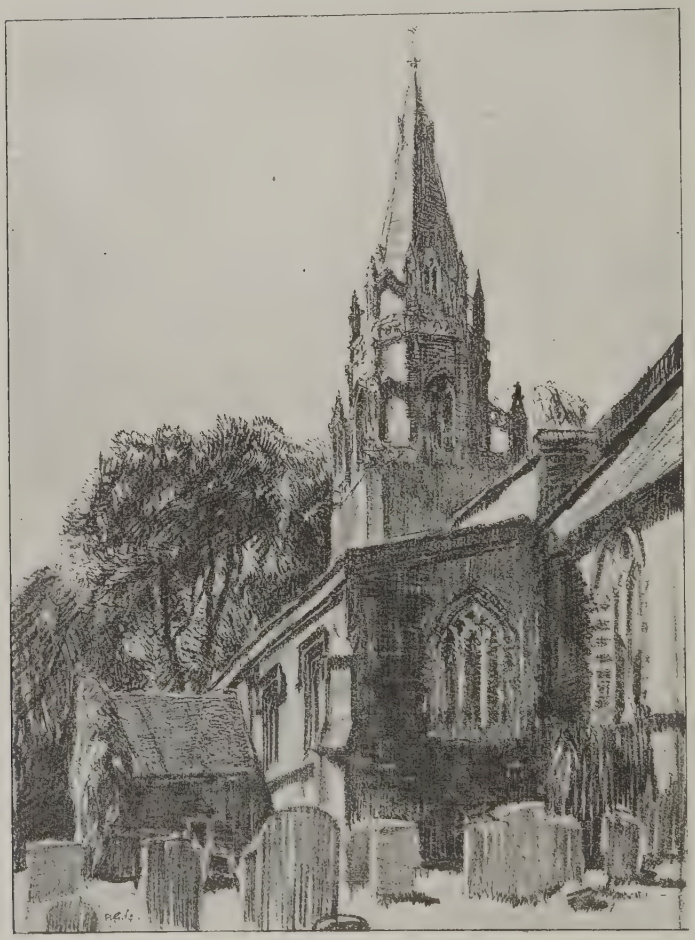
will be seen on every side but the north "enigmatical doorways apparently leading no whither," as the writer just quoted terms them. The one on the east side may have opened into a chamber between the internal and external roofs of the nave. The latter was much higher than at present, as may be seen by the mark still existing. As for the remaining two doorways no clue to their purpose remains. Like the triangular headed

[1] Baldwin Brown, *l.c.* p. 290.

openings in the stage above they are cut through the thickness of the wall without any splay. The battlemented parapet is, of course, a later addition. Inside the church what is most remarkable is the curious appearance of the tower arch. This was originally semicircular, but it has been raised and clumsily converted into a pointed arch, in which the Norman billets look singularly out of place.

On the Northampton-Wellingborough Road.

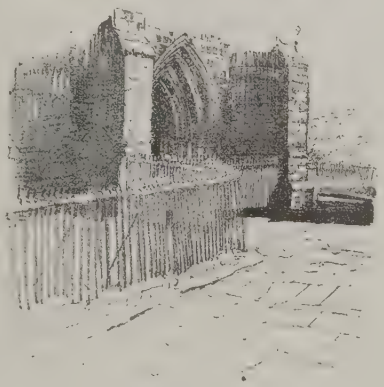
Cresting the hill, we reach the Northampton and Wellingborough road, now, like others in the shoe country, the route of the well regulated motor omnibus. At Wilby we may halt, not only to see the church steeple with its triple division of tower, lantern and spire, but also to avail ourselves of the excellent accommodation of the "George"—a not inconvenient centre from which you may explore the surrounding country. Here then we may set up our rest, but should you elect to continue your journey, another couple of miles will bring



Wilby Church.

you to Wellingborough, the fourth town of the county in size, and the seat of flourishing ironworks, the flames and smoke of which proclaim their presence from afar. The metal is extracted from the local ironstone, the rich

brown ochre of which forms such an effective combination with the paler Barnack or Weldon freestone. Here in Wellingborough the body of the parish church is a fine example of the ironstone used alone, while the tower displays the combination in alternate bands. This was one of the churches belonging to the abbey of Crowland, even before the Norman Conquest, but for Crowland I must refer the reader to the Lincolnshire volume of this series and hasten on to relate an adventure which befel one of its vicars, when Crowland had long been abandoned to the owls and the bats.



West Door, Wellingborough Church.

Mr. Jones had been vicar of Wellingborough for forty years when the Civil War broke out, and was now seventy years of age and a confirmed invalid. But what of that? Those bands of marauders who then began to prowl about the country making havoc of the church had little respect either for age or infirmity. They haled the old man out of house and home, and marched him off to Northampton as their prisoner. Walker (it must be premised that he gets his account from one of the Royalist news sheets), tells the story in *The Sufferings of the Clergy*, and here it is:

"Among other of their *Outrages*" these ruffians "had *Murdered a Barber*, and taken away a *Bear* which he kept. As they were on the Road, they prest poor Old Mr. *Jones* to make more *Speed* than his *Age* and *Infirmity* [he was lame] would admit of; and in order to it one Lieutenant *Grimes*, to see if Fear would add to his Strength, forceth the Bear upon him, which Running between his Legs took him upon her Back, and

laying aside the Intractableness of her Nature grew patient of her Burthen, and to the Astonishment of the Beholders carried him quietly; so that what was intended as *Violence*, became his *Ease*. The *Rebels* overcome by so unusal an Example of Kindness, the savage *Bear Reproving the Madness* of their Fury, they remove *Mr. Jones* from off the *Bear* to a *Horse*.' " The mount, however, was a sorry jade and did " 'not *better* the *Condition* of his *Transportation*.' " But retribution was at hand:

Old Houses, Wellingborough.

" 'One of the *Rout* observed to be extreamely *Active* in all these *Insolencies*, and to have a hand in *Murdering* the *Barber*, seeing the Tameness of the *Bear*, as quiet under Mr. *Jones*, as if she had been accustomed to the *Saddle;* presumes that it was *no more than up and Ride*, and presently bestrides the *Bear*, which, as if she had been of that *Race* that did revenge the Prophet *Elisha's* Quarrel, Dismounts the bold *Rider;* and as if she had been *Robb'd of her Whelps* did so *mangle*, rend and

tear him with her *Teeth* and *Paws*, that the presumptuous Wretch *died of those Hurts* suddenly after.'" After some months' ill-usage at Northampton Mr. Jones was suffered to return to his living, "but keeping up, as he had formerly done, the *Rules* and *Orders* of the *Church* with the utmost Exactness, and *Preaching* as *boldly* as ever against the *Rebellion*," he was apprehended and carried off to Northampton a second time, where his ill-usage and privations soon put an end to his life. "Nor did their *Malice* stop here: for one *John Gifford* (who was the *Hogg-Herd's* Son of *Little-Houghton*, had been bred a *Knitter*, became afterwards a *Horse-Buyer*, but *then Mayor of Northampton*, Colonel of the Town-*Regiment*, and as it seems, at *that time* also *Ordinary* of the Place) Order'd, that when *they came to Interr the skin and Bones of this starved Martyr* (for *Flesh he had none*, as the *Mercury* observes) that no other Form should be used, than this:

Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust;
Here's the Pit, and in you must."

With which choice specimen of his wit we may hope that the ex-horse-coper was satisfied and that the "order" went no further.

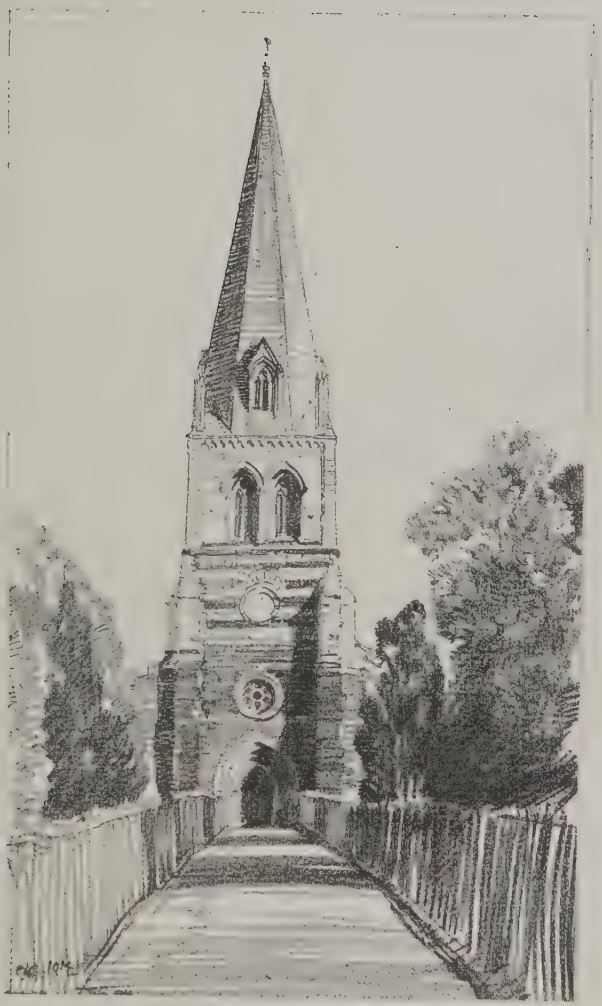
Mr. Griggs's picturesque drawing of the "Hind" Hotel may perhaps tempt the traveller to recreate himself there. If this was the inn at which Horace Walpole stayed, and this is uncertain, he may be sure of better entertainment than that which Mr. Walpole experienced in 1763: "We lay," he writes to his friend Mann, "at Wellingborough—pray never lie there—the beastliest inn upon earth is there! We were carried into a vast bed-chamber, which I suppose is the club-room, for it stunk of tobacco like a justice of the peace! I desired some boiling water for tea; they brought me a sugar-dish of hot water in a pewter plate."

And now for the open road once more. Our way lies through the great suburb which owes its existence to the two great railways which skirt the town on this side, and is comprised in the modern parish of St. Mary. The parish church, now far

on its way towards completion, must on no account be passed by unvisited. Amid such surroundings it is indeed astonishing to find an undertaking so ambitious, but the enterprising and undaunted spirit of the vicar seconded by the munificence of local benefactors was not to be quelled, and the result is an edifice worthy of the best traditions of mediæval art. The great height of the church, 60 feet to the roof ridge, perhaps seems rather out of proportion to its length, but when the nine bays and the tower of six stages are completed it will be time enough to judge of the general effect.

The Hind Hotel, Wellingborough.

The style is late Perpendicular, thus picking up our native tradition where it left off, and the plan provides for a nave and chancel 22 feet wide under a continuous roof, but divided by a Renaissance screen carrying a rood loft and singing gallery, north and south aisles each 16 feet wide, and outside the aisles again north and south chapels also 16 feet wide, divided off by arcades and screens. Thus the width of the whole is 86 feet. The material is the deep coloured local ironstone, with dressings of Weldon stone; the reader will therefore have no misgivings



Wellingborough Church.

as to the exterior. As for the interior, it is impossible here to do justice to the splendour of the general effect, the tall fluted and octagonal piers with their elaborately carved capitals, tinctured with gold and royal blue, the fan-traceried vaults, and the painted and panelled ceilings. In short, there is no doubt that in St. Mary's Wellingborough will possess the finest modern church in the county, and one worthy to take its place among the famous churches of the Nene valley.

Once clear of Wellingborough and we are in the thick of the spires. They are scattered far and wide over the slopes and

Thrapston Bridge.

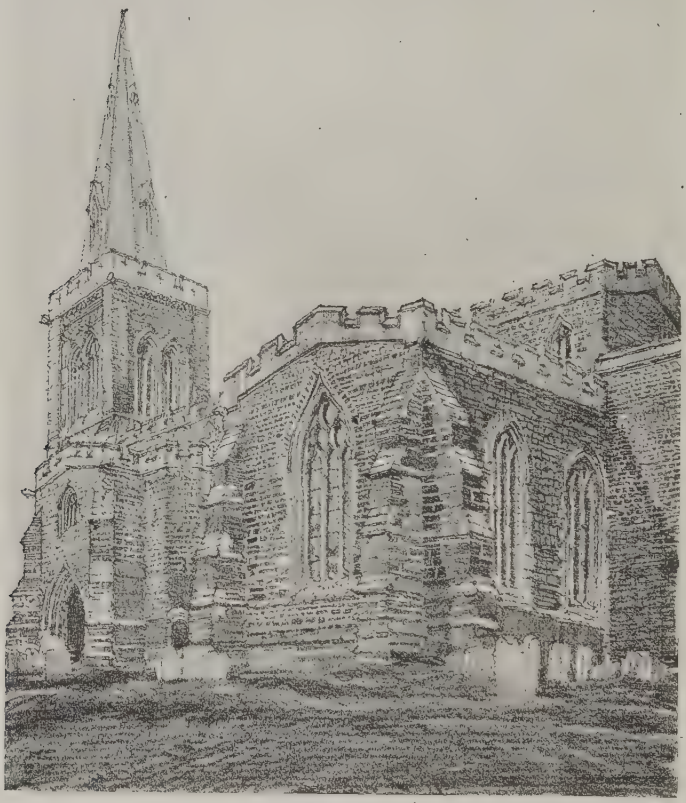
summits on either side of the river, and as he traverses the more elevated region the stranger will mark these stately sentinels outlined upon the horizon like the towers that crown the ridges of North Devon. This invigorating upland country that lies between the Ouse and the Nene has its charms either for the cyclist ranging from village to village, or for the sportsman in the wake of the Fitzwilliam or Oakley hounds. Here and there a plantation or a gorse cover chequers the long stretches of arable or pasture, for between the distant villages there are few

traces of habitation beyond the infrequent farmstead or the keeper's lodge. Very different is the woodland country between the Nene and the Welland. From Stamford to Kettering we can seldom forget that we are in the purlieus of Rockingham Forest; wooded hills and watery dales in pleasing diversity, well-timbered parks, bosky lawns and ancient homesteads invite the lingering curiosity of the stranger, whose good fortune it may be to share for a while with the native his daily walks and ancient neighbourhood.

As for the villages, the northern frontier of the industrial district may be drawn from Thrapston to Kettering; north of this they retain their old world character unimpaired. South of it the unspoilt village is the exception; here the shoe trade is rampant, it has quadrupled the population, and has engulfed the original settlement. Yet in these places, Raunds, Stanwick, Irthlingborough, Rushden, Higham, Irchester, are some of the most splendid churches in Northamptonshire, and to these we are now to devote our attention.

Let us begin with Finedon. He who reaches the village from Wellingborough will find at once all that need detain him; for all the rest of the way to Irthlingborough he may shut his eyes, except for the view from the hill-top before he descends into the Nene valley. Behold first the "Bell," the oldest inn in England, the local patriot will declare, and its proximity to Hall and Church is in its favour, but I decline to be responsible for setting it further back than the Tudors. Finedon church, though cruciform, has no central tower, but the fine steeple at the west end makes ample amends. Compared with Higham or Irchester you might take exception to the relative proportions of tower and spire, you might think the one too tall or the other too short; the combination at any rate seems hardly so perfect, but like Higham, and unlike Irchester, it is a parapeted spire, with a defended path round its base on which ladders can be placed when repairs are required. At Irchester, on the other hand, we have the so-called "broach" spire with low pyramids at the angles covering the internal

cross arches or squinches on which the spire rests, and there being no parapet, a scaffolding has to be erected right up from the ground before external repairs can be effected. In this



Finedon Church.

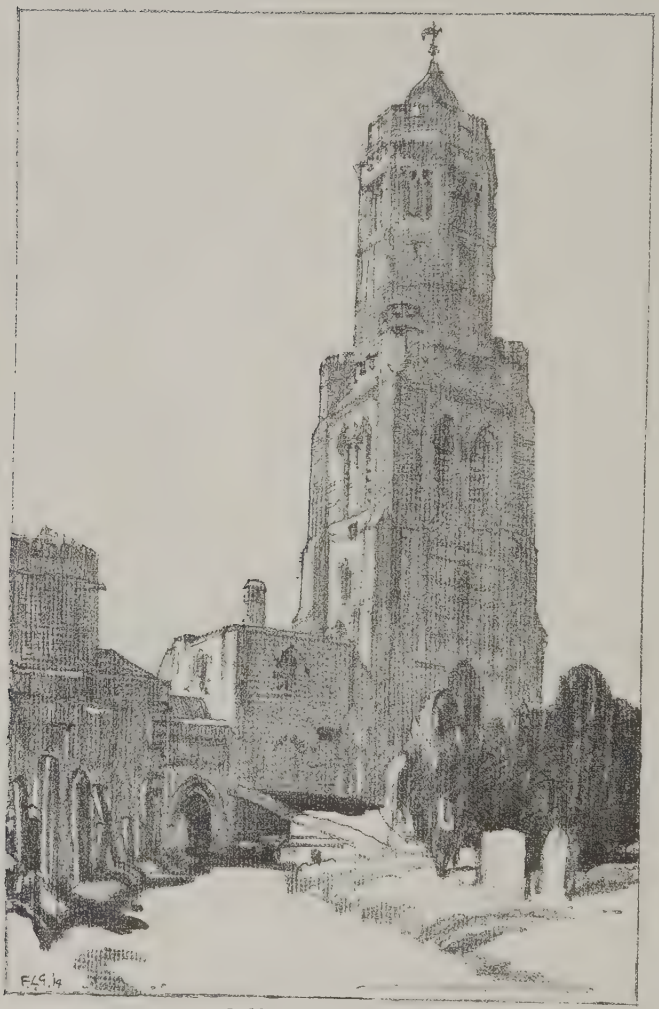
county both kinds of spire usually have two or three tiers of gabled spire-lights, which are not merely ornamental, but lessen the weight of the masonry and ventilate the interior.

Here at Finedon there are two tiers. The steeple is rather later than the rest of the church, which belongs to the early part of the fourteenth century.

The spacious interior is remarkable for the elaborate straining arch rendered necessary by the thrust of the western walls of the transepts. There is a similar arch at Rushden and another in the north chapel at Easton Maudit. The beautifully carved pews in the centre of the church are modern copies, but in the aisles the original ones, saved from destruction 300 years ago by the intervention of the Chancellor of the diocese, are preserved. The ancient Norman font, the relic of an earlier church than the present one, was less fortunate; it was turned out and was finally rescued from a neighbouring field. The sculptures round its sides are badly damaged, but on the rim may be seen marks said to be those of the seals affixed when the font was closed up under the Papal interdict of 1215. In the room over the porch is a collection of theological books given by one of the Dolben family, who owned the Hall in the eighteenth century—while another member of the same family paved the chancel with Ketton stone relieved with black marble, and to conclude this list of benefactions, the roof of the church is covered with copper from the Glamorganshire mines of the Mackworths, into which family the heiress of the Dolbens married. We shall fall in with the Dolbens again at Stanwick.[1]

Across the valley the spires of Higham and Rushden are already signalling to us, but a halt must first be made at Irthlingborough. At Irthlingborough the man who has left his mark upon the place was not, as at Higham, a native, but a Londoner, who having made a fortune in trade was desirous,

[1] "A curious local trade now practically extinct was the preparation of the famous Finedon dried apples. They resembled the Normandy pippins of the present day, but instead of being dried in the sun, were placed on trays and set in the bakers' ovens some hours after the bread was drawn. . . . About the time of the battle of Waterloo the trade was most flourishing."—C. H. Vellacott in *V.C.H.*, ii, p. 291.



Irthlingborough Church.

like many of his class both before and after him, of becoming the owner of a country estate. In 1353, accordingly, John Pyel, who afterwards rose to be Lord Mayor, purchased the manor of Irthlingborough from the lord of Drayton, and some score of years later obtained the royal licence to found a college of priests in the church. This consisted of six secular canons, one of whom was to be dean, and four clerks. The dean would take the place of the previously existing rector, and the whole body would be responsible for the services of the church, including the celebration of such Masses as might be ordained for the souls of the founders. I say founders, because John Pyel did not live to carry out his intention, but left his design to be completed by his widow. It is to this foundation that Irthlingborough owes the enlargement of its church, and the remarkable detached western tower surmounted by its lofty octagon.[1] Although the exterior of this octagon has two stages only, the interior at some time subsequent to its erection was cased, fitted with fireplaces and divided into three storeys, thus forming a dwelling for some official of the college. As for the other collegiate buildings, they have all disappeared, with the exception of a building connecting the western porch with the tower and three vaults to the north of it, which were probably cellars. The church itself is spacious, with transepts projecting from the aisles, but not exactly opposite each other. Almost all the brasses have been torn from their matrices, but in the south aisle of the choir, lying upon a panelled table tomb, are the effigies of John Pyel and of Joan his wife.

At Irthlingborough, the Nene is crossed by a fine mediæval bridge, and a couple of miles higher up at Ditchford, where the old Bedford and Leicester road forded the river, by a still finer one. Our road takes us over the former, and we will then steer for Stanwick and its thirteenth century spire. This is the first of the five sentinels which guard the frontiers of the wide upland we have now reached. The peculiar feature here

[1] The tower, being in a dangerous state, was taken down and rebuilt about thirty years ago.

is the octagonal tower, and the amateur is advised to ascend to the belfry, if he wishes to appreciate the cunning arrangement of the stairs.

Among the rectors of Stanwick are William Dolben, father of the Archbishop of York of that name, and Denison Cumberland, father of Richard Cumberland, the original, so tradition says, of Sir Fretful Plagiary. Dr. Dolben was so popular with his parishioners, that in his last illness they voluntarily

Irthlingborough Bridge.

ploughed and sowed his glebe, for the benefit of his widow. His son John, the future archbishop, began life as a soldier in the Royalist army and was wounded at Marston Moor. He was afterwards one of the select few at Oxford who privately kept up the services of the Church during the Commonwealth, and after the Restoration was successively Bishop of Rochester and Primate of the northern province. He was, we read, "a man of a free, generous and noble disposition, and withal

of natural bold and happy eloquence," and it was his eldest son who by marriage with the heiress of Finedon brought that estate into the family.

Richard Cumberland, in his *Memoirs*, speaks of the happy holidays which he spent with his parents at the rectory in the forties of the eighteenth century. His father combined with the duties of an exemplary parish priest the office of a justice of the peace, and it is pleasant to hear that he " never once had to issue his warrant within the precincts of his own happy village," and that when differences did occur between his parishioners his " very hospitable and generous disposition rarely failed to put contentious spirits at peace by reference to the kitchen and the cellar." Nor, like many an honest Northamptonshire rector since his day, did he disdain the innocent pleasures of the chase : " he was light and elegant in his person, and had in his early youth kept horses and rode matches at Newmarket after the example of his elder brother ; but though his profession had now put a stop to those levities he shared in a pack of harriers with a neighbouring gentleman, and was a bold and excellent rider." His wife, a daughter of the famous master of Trinity, Dr. Bentley, had inherited her father's taste for letters, and under her guidance it was that her son, the future playwright, first learned to read and appreciate Shakespeare. The first tangible outcome of these studies was " a kind of *cento*, which I intitled *Shakespear in the Shades* " ; the characters—Hamlet, Ophelia, Romeo, Juliet, Lear, Cordelia, Ariel, Shakespeare himself—rub shoulders in this strange effort, which his characteristic self-complacency would not allow the author to pass over in silence, but if the reader is still curious I must refer him to the *Memoirs* themselves.

There are several attractive old houses in Stanwick, which will afford the artist material for his pencil, but the same cannot be said of Raunds, whither an easy run of two miles soon brings us. But what of that ? the church remains, and at Raunds the church is all. We ride up the dull, ugly village street, and dismount at the foot of the churchyard steps to find ourselves

confronted by the most triumphant effort of church architecture that we have as yet seen. It is on this side, from the west, that the famous steeple of Raunds must first be contemplated. Mr. Griggs's sketch gives you the view from the north, and all I have to do is to help to make the history of the building intelligible.

Raunds.

Carry your thoughts back to the days when England was settling down under the second Henry, when the prosperity of the countryside, which made possible the lavish outburst of churchbuilding under the third Henry, was only beginning to dawn, and you may envisage the modest, towerless, aisleless cross-built church which has grown into the spacious edifice we now behold. The next century saw first the extension

westwards of the south transept of this little cruciform church to form an aisle, and then its prolongation eastward as a chancel chapel. In the same century the tower and spire were rising at the west end of the nave. Next the chancel itself was lengthened by a single bay on the east, an extension which made it possible to spare half a bay on the west to the nave. A new chancel arch was accordingly built to the east of the old one, and thus the westernmost bay of the south chapel was cut in

Ringstead Church.

half, and a half bay you will see on either side of the arch to this day.

Two rows of the characteristic fourteenth century ornament on the nave side of the new arch are a sufficient indication of its date; and, lastly, about the same time, the church was completed by the addition of the north aisle. The clerestory, the fine timber roof to the nave, and the vaulted roof to the lower stage of the tower are the work of the fifteenth century.

So much for the growth of the church, and the visitor may be left to study the details for himself; he will notice the fifteenth

century clock face over the tower arch with names of the donors, John Catlyn and Sarah his wife—well-to-do villagers presumably,[1] the wall paintings over the north arcade, and above the chancel arch on the nave side the white, blank spaces where the upper parts of the rood and its attendant figures once stood; the lower parts extended downwards against a wooden boarding or tympanum which filled the upper part of the arch. The holes in the soffit in which the uprights used for strengthening this tympanum were fixed, as well as the marks where the ends of

Higham Ferrers Church and School-house.

the transverse beam which supported the uprights were inserted, may still be detected by the curious.

On our way to Higham we come upon the homely village of Chelveston snugly tucked away in a gentle dip of the higher land. The church, which stands on the higher ground away from the village, is something of a puzzle. In the main it is a thirteenth century building, but the western lancets have been cut away to make room for a great Perpendicular window. The east wall of the chancel looks as if it had been brought further

[1] By the time of the Herald's Visitation of 1564 the family had become armigerous, and a Robert Catlyn was Lord Chief Justice of England.

in ; at present it cuts the eastern half of a double piscina divided by an Early English shaft. The tower is on the north side and is connected with the nave by a very lofty passage. Now a glance will show that the piers on the south side of this passage are so massive that they must have been meant to support a tower. For some reason, however, probably because it was suspected that the soil at this spot was not firm enough to sustain the weight, the tower was eventually built further north, and the question arises : Was this passage originally the lowest stage of a tower never completed, or was it built after the existing tower in order to connect it with the church ? Its great height perhaps points to the former alternative. But this is a point which will not disturb the pleasure of the visitor. As he pauses on the Higham road to take his last look at Chelveston, he will carry away with him the picture of a sunlit tower embosomed in trees—the emblem, too expressive for words, of the peace of the countryside.

The ancient borough of Higham Ferrers was half a century ago, if ever there was one, a quiet, old-fashioned country town, and even now, until it narrows towards the Rushden end, the principal street retains much of its former character. As for its name, the " high ham " on the hill above the river valley explains itself, its distinctive title commemorates one of the most ancient families in the kingdom, a family from which the present earl of that name can trace his descent. Henry de Ferrers, *Ferrariae* in the Latin chroniclers, is not one of those mythical ancestors who " came in with the Conqueror." He was an historical personage and was rewarded for his services with a goodly array of English manors. Many of these lay in the county of Derby, and when his son Robert distinguished himself at the battle of the Standard, he was created Earl of Derby. Seven earls from father to son followed him at Tutbury Castle, and it was William, the sixth of these, who gave his name to Higham, which he purchased of King John. But the most redoubtable earl of them all was Robert, the eighth and last. He was one of the leaders of the popular party in the struggle

against Henry III., and his uncompromising attitude even after the crushing defeat of Evesham led to his being excluded from the amnesty known as the Dictum of Kenilworth. After a few years' imprisonment he was deprived of his earldom and of the greater portion of his estates, many of which, and among them Higham, were conferred by the King upon his younger son, Edmund, Earl of Lancaster.[1] Henceforward a Plantagenet and not a Ferrers was its lord, but Higham Ferrers it had been, and such is the vital tenacity of place-names, Higham Ferrers it remained. Northamptonshire therefore knew the Ferrers no more, and those who wish to follow their fortunes must look for them in Staffordshire, where a son of the dispossessed Robert was created Lord Ferrers of Chartley.

So far we have concerned ourselves with its eponymous heroes only, but now for the patron saint of Higham, the great fifteenth century archbishop, Henry Chichele. Known to the world at large as the stern arbiter of the Lollards, the staunch supporter of the war-like ambitions of his Royal master, and above all as the munificent founder of All Souls', he is remembered in his native town as the patron of the church and the benefactor of the poor and aged. His father was a prosperous yeoman, more than once mayor of the borough, and of his brothers one rose to be Sheriff of the City of London, and another to be its Lord Mayor. In 1414 he succeeded Thomas Arundel as Archbishop of Canterbury, and in 1422 he founded here in Higham a college consisting of eight chaplains or fellows, four clerks and six choristers. Of the fellows, one was to be master, an office sometimes combined with that of vicar of the parish, another grammar master, and another master of singing. Thus both religion and the arts were provided for, and a taste for music, not yet extinct, encouraged among the townsfolk. The stalls of the fellows and chaplains still remain in the church, in the offices of which it was their duty to participate, and in particular were they bound to pray for the King, Queen and

[1] It is interesting to know that the Duchy of Lancaster still has land in Higham.

founder during life and for their souls after death. Their domicile was a building in the main street of the town, still called " The College." The Hall and the Chapel, in which the offices were said on ordinary days, are both gone, but the front and the south side of the quadrangle are still standing, and over the gateway you may see three richly carved niches, which would be filled with the archbishop's three patron saints, St. Mary the Virgin, St. Thomas of Canterbury, and St. Edward the Confessor.

With this new foundation of his the archbishop incorporated two earlier charitable institutions, to which a few lines must be devoted. These were the School and the Bede-house. Before going to Winchester in 1373 it is highly probable that he may have himself attended this school; the master was then one Henry Barton, who afterwards was Mayor. The Duke of Lancaster (Henry IV.) chose as his successor Master Robert Orcheorerd of Burton, a man of " great ability and sufficient discretion in grammar." He was " to have and to hold [the mastership] in manner heretofore used, for the term of his life, provided he behave himself well and duly in the same office." Later, when the school became appendant to Chichele's new foundation it passed under the control of the " master of grammar," and so it remained till the college was dissolved at the Reformation. It then came into lay hands, and in Mary's reign the appointment of master was vested in the corporation. It survived for nearly four hundred years longer under this *régime*, but at last, in 1913, its rather chequered career was finally closed, and its endowments now go towards providing the children of the place with scholarships in secondary schools.

Its local habitation, however, remains. Look at those two striking Perpendicular buildings in the churchyard. That one which adjoins the north-west corner of the church may be identified with the " Jesus Chapel " mentioned in the inventory of the college property at its dissolution. Now it is clear that the easternmost of its three bays was divided from the other two by a screen, and in the south wall you will find traces of

the staircase which led to the rood loft. Thus the rest of the building, out of service hours, if we may use a familiar expression, could be used for the school, and we know on the best authority that it was a common practice for a pedant to keep a school in a church. Indeed the building, though now assigned to parochial uses, is known as the school-house to this day.

The College, Higham Ferrers.

The other building, in which the combination of dark and light stone is employed with great effect, is on the south side of the churchyard, near the vicarage. It is the Bede-house, but it too has ceased to fulfil its original purpose. Under Chichele's foundation it took the place of an earlier hospital dedicated to St. James, and was fitted up for the accommodation of twelve poor men of fifty years

and upwards with a woman, of at least fifty years, to wait upon them. A row of cubicles on either side would open into a common hall, those on the south side being interrupted by the fireplace, which still remains.

The founder's statutes are preserved among the Lansdowne MSS. in the British Museum, and the strictest rules regulated the daily life of the brethren. Special care was taken of their spiritual welfare, and their religious exercises were minutely prescribed. Thus at 7 in summer and 8 in winter they began the day with an hour's prayer and meditation in the church, but liberal as this allowance seems to us, it had to be followed by another two hours in the afternoon, while for the offices they had their own chapel at the east end of their hall, and separated from it by a screen.

The five great crocketed spires of Northamptonshire are Higham, Rushden, Kettering, Oundle, and King's Sutton. Higham and Rushden belong to the Decorated, the rest to the Perpendicular period. Higham, Rushden, and Sutton have pinnacles at the tower angles which are connected with the spire by flying buttresses, while Kettering and Oundle, having turrets instead of pinnacles, have no flying buttresses.

If we compare Higham and Rushden from the point of view of a spectator surveying them from the west, the palm must be awarded to Rushden so far as the general effect is concerned, but when we come to details, Rushden has nothing to rival the splendid doorway of the sister church with its wealth of adornment, and—rare feature in a parochial church—its double portal.

Now pass in through the tower and you will have no hesitation in pronouncing that, as an interior, Higham is the more impressive. At Rushden you will find a wide nave, north and south aisles extending to the eastern extremity of the church, and short, square transepts. But all this fails to produce the effect of spaciousness and freedom, which strikes the stranger on his first entrance at Higham. Here you have two parallel naves and chancels, either nave

with its exterior aisle. The body of the church, apart from the chancels, thus presents you with three parallel arcades and four gangways. You will have a difficulty in finding another church of the same size to rival the effect thus produced.

As for dates, the southern half of the church together with the tower are thirteenth century work, the northern half and

High Street, Rushden.

the spire are fourteenth century. It will be observed that the piers of the central arcade are octagonal, and if they are in the line of the original north wall, they must have been inserted when this wall was cut through for the enlargement of the church. If this is not what happened, we are driven to the supposition that the whole of the building operations were

spread over a long period, and that the northern half of the church was not reached till these octagonal piers came into vogue. In any case, they are characteristic of the Decorated period.

An inscription on the exterior of the tower records its rebuilding in 1631–32. By that time the structure had become shaky, and the whole steeple, or at any rate the upper stages of the tower and the spire, were built up again.

Rushden Church.

On the floor of the south chancel is a handsome cross in brass commemorating Thomas and Agnes Chichele, the parents of the archbishop, and in the same floor would be placed originally the brass of Laurence Seymour, rector 1289–1337—the finest brass in the church, and one of the finest in the whole county. It is conjectured that he rebuilt this south chancel about the same time (1320–1330) that Henry, third Earl of Lancaster, was building the north chancel as a chantry chapel for himself.

This conjecture is based upon the existence of a table tomb beneath the easternmost arch dividing the two chancels with coats of arms on its sides connecting it with the Lancastrian house. The suggestion is that the earl designed this tomb for

Irchester.

his own interment, but that he afterwards changed his mind, for, in fact, he is buried at a later foundation of his, the hospital of Newarke at Leicester, and though the north chancel was finished the chantry itself was never founded. On this cenotaph there was a convenient space for the Seymour brass; here,

therefore, safe from the tread of human feet, it was placed, and here it remains.

The road from Higham to Irchester is barren enough of interest, save for the beautifully wooded oasis of Knuston Hall,

Irchester.

and in Irchester itself, another overgrown village, there is nothing to detain us except the church, the spire of which, a late example of the broach type, has been already mentioned among the notable landmarks of this district.

The tower is built in the now familiar alternate courses of dark and light stone, and its lower stages are strongly buttressed at the angles; the uppermost stage is unbuttressed and save for a slight and elegant cornice passes at once into the spire, the tapering angles or arrises of which are emphasised by a pronounced "bead" but without crockets, and the facets are relieved by three tiers of spire lights. The church itself appears to be of various dates, mainly of the fourteenth century, but the spire is late Decorated, and fragments of twelfth and thirteenth century work remain. The chancel floor has been raised and has brought the aumbries, piscina, and sedilia nearly down to its level. In the north wall of the chancel is a curious recess, perhaps an Easter sepulchre.

North of the village, close to the Wellingborough road, is a comfortable seventeenth century homestead, which gets its name, Chester House, from its proximity to a small Roman settlement covering about twenty acres. The place bears the significant appellation of Burrow field, but it has never been thoroughly explored. Some thirty years ago or more a very small part was excavated, and traces of buildings discovered, but when the work was done the farmer who rented the field was allowed to carry away some of the foundations for building material. Like other Romano-British villages, it was surrounded by a wall 8 feet thick, parts of which were still standing two centuries since. Further exploration would probably be rewarded, for Roman remains of any kind are not very numerous in this county; Castor with its famous pottery manufacture is the best known—but to this we shall come later on.

CHAPTER III

DRAYTON—LOWICK—ISLIP—THE ALDWINCLES—WADENHOE—THORPE ACHURCH—TICHMARSH—THE BARNWELLS—POLEBROOK

THE motor car if it has made the roads less pleasant for the cyclist has certainly enhanced the comfort of the inn. Instead of the gloomy "Coffee Room" with its large table spread from early morn to dewy eve, at which perhaps you are the solitary guest, and where between the consumption of meals you are yourself consumed with *ennui*, you find the pleasant dining-room with its many tables, and the comfortable "Lounge." In saying this I am of course thinking of the towns, but the country inn has its own delights of another kind, though in Northamptonshire, alas! such inns are few and far between—all the more reason why I should not fail to mention those I have had the fortune to meet with.

In this and the following chapter we shall be exploring the portion of the Nene valley which lies between Thrapston and Wansford, where the river takes its bend eastwards to find its way into the North Sea, and the stranger cannot do better than take up his quarters at the "Talbot" in the beautiful old stone-built town of Oundle, from which he can make his excursions north or south, east or west, either by road or rail. There is much to see, it is a region of manifold attraction.

Let us take the train to Thrapston and then steer to the north-west through Islip. In a mile we cross Harper's Brook, a tributary of the Nene which comes down from Rockingham Forest by Stanion and Brigstock, and then follow its course

upwards to Lowick. Turn to the left at the entrance of the village, and pass into the park of Drayton, one of the most distinguished of the great houses of the county. A rugged avenue of elms half a mile long brings us within sight of the south front, and a perplexing medley of towers, battlements, chimneys and cupolas it seems to be to the uninitiated. We may not be privileged to make a more intimate acquaintance with it, but any wonder we may have felt at the apparent confusion vanishes, when we learn that centuries have contributed to the completion of the pile before us, a period stretching from the third Edward to the third George. De Veres, Greenes, Mordaunts, Sackvilles have all had their share in the building, and the work of each may still be distinguished; one family only seems to have left no tangible memorial of itself, that of Stafford, two generations of which reigned here in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.

A Meeting-house at Thrapston.

More than two centuries ago a folio of 700 pages was devoted to the lords of Drayton, and has ever since been the storehouse upon which the family chroniclers have drawn, but only the briefest outline can be attempted here. The first to come upon the scene is the lofty name of De Vere—its bearers, Earls of Oxford for more than five hundred years.[1] But it was not to this elder line that Drayton belonged. The first earl, it is true, at his

[1] 1155–1702.

death in 1194 could call it his, but to him succeeded a younger son, whose descendants, becoming as it were indigenous, dropped their patronymic and adopted the place name. Thus it came to pass that a Sir Simon de Drayton, early in Edward III.'s reign, was the builder of the oldest portions of the house. The turreted and battlemented south front, together with a parallel

Lowick Church.

range of buildings separated from it by a courtyard, is his work. The latter consisted of a hall with a vaulted undercroft at its daïs, or upper end, and above the undercroft a drawing-room or solar. The undercroft is still there in its original state, but the rest has been much altered and disguised. After Sir Simon's death Drayton came to his sister's son, Sir Henry Greene, of

Buckton or Boughton, a few miles north of Northampton.[1] This family got their name from the extensive green of that village, famous even down to recent times for its fair. Sir Henry was the friend of Richard II., who appears in Shakespeare's play, and who, with Sir John Bushy and Scrope, Earl of Wiltshire, "at Bristol lost their heads" in 1399. His grandson, another Sir Henry, about 1460 built the east and west towers and the north porch of the hall. This Sir Henry's daughter and heiress married a younger son of the Duke of Buckingham, who fell at Northampton in 1460, and so carried Drayton to the Staffords.

The Staffords, however, did not hold it long. Sir Henry's son-in-law was created Earl of Wiltshire by Edward IV., and when his son, the second earl, died in 1499 it passed back to a branch of the De Veres long settled at Great Addington, in the person of Elizabeth de Vere, whose grandmother had been a Greene. Elizabeth's husband was Sir John Mordaunt, of Turvey on the Ouse, between Olney and Bedford, and thus began the long tenure of the estate by the Mordaunts. First as Lords Mordaunt and then as Earls of Peterborough, their reign lasted for two hundred years, and only ended with the death of the second earl's daughter, Mary, in 1705.

During this period they did not fail to leave their mark upon the place. Lewis, the third Lord Mordaunt, "a Lover of Art, and an Encourager of Learning and also a Builder," according to the folio of 1685, in the time of Elizabeth built the north-east wing and laid out the gardens, and in Charles II.'s peaceful time Henry, the second Earl of Peterborough, remodelled the east front and much of the interior of the house. It was this earl who with his chaplain's help composed and put forth under the *nom de plume* of "Robert Halstead" the folio in question, now one of the rarest books in existence, for of "Succinct Genealogies by Robert Halstead" only twenty-four copies were printed, and it is therefore only to be found in a few great libraries.

[1] Not to be confused with Boughton near Kettering.

It was this Earl, too, whose loyalty to the House of Stuart brought the Protestant mob down upon Drayton at the Revolution. He had turned Papist, and they wreaked their rage upon his private chapel. Not content with this, they proceeded to search " every corn-mow and hayrick " (a west country newsman would have written haymow and corn-rick) for arms, and finding none seized the steward and threatened to burn him alive if he would not show them where they were hidden ; " on which he scirmishing out declared they were thrown into the fish-pond "—and sure enough in the fish-pond they were. "Also there were " (not in the pond presumably) "200 barrels of gunpowder and several sorts of fireworks " (hand grenades and squibs ?). Had Fortune favoured King James, Drayton was evidently prepared to put up a fight. The chapel remained in its devastated condition till it was restored by " Lady Betty " in the next century, and it has ever since been called " Lady Betty's Chapel."

At Earl Henry's death in 1697 the earldom went to his nephew, the famous commander of Queen Anne's time, and Drayton to his daughter Mary, who bequeathed it to her second husband, Sir John Germain.

Sir John Germain, a Dutch soldier of fortune, patronised by William III. and generally believed to have been that monarch's half-brother, effected alterations at Drayton in the taste of his day. His are the colonnades on the east and west sides of the court, and he also put in the coved ceiling and sashed windows in the hall, and lined its walls with large panelled wainscoting. He married as his second wife a daughter of the Earl of Berkeley, the Lady Betty Germain of eighteenth century memoirs and letters. After her husband's death, in 1718, she remained the venerated and hospitable mistress of Drayton for fifty years, and then in accordance with her husband's express wish she left the place to a younger son of the first Duke of Dorset. This was no other than Lord George Sackville, whose refusal to obey his general's orders at Minden has made his name familiar to hundreds who never heard of Drayton. But by the time he

succeeded to the property he had outlived the slur which his conduct on that occasion had cast on his reputation, and as Lord George Germain he filled an important post in the State.[1] His great grandson is the present owner of Drayton.

Lord George, who came to the estate in 1769 but only occasionally resided here,[2] is the last who made any considerable alteration in the interior arrangements of the house, and even he did not do much beyond introducing into some of the rooms the decorations of his day. Thus it is he who is responsible for the present aspect of the dining-room, which had some time previously been formed out of Sir Simon's buttery and pantry. As for the gardens, we have seen that they were begun by the third Lord Mordaunt, and the work was carried on by the second earl and his daughter. Lady Betty in the next century resisted the powerful fascinations of the landscape school, and the consequence is that with its terraces, parterres, pleached alleys and straight avenues Drayton remains one of the most complete examples of formal gardening which survives in England.

The slight acquaintance which we have now been able to make with Drayton will give us a greater interest in the church of Lowick, where so many of its owners are buried, and by this time we have arrived at the churchyard gate and are admiring the effect of the many pinnacled tower. From within the parapet rises an octagon lantern; the four corner pinnacles of the tower rise to the same height as the eight pinnacles of the lantern, and are connected with them by flying buttresses. At Fotheringhay, where we shall find another spireless octagon (at Wilby the octagon is crowned by a spire), the angles of the tower have low turrets in the place of pinnacles.

Inside the church the chief interest centres in the monuments and especially in those of the Greenes. First look

[1] He was Colonial Secretary under Lord North in 1775.

[2] The amusing account of Lord George's habits to be found in Cumberland's *Memoirs* seems to refer rather to his residence at his Sussex seat near Tunbridge Wells, where Cumberland then lived.

at the alabaster tomb of Ralph Greene, Esquire, and his wife Katharine beneath the arch dividing the chancel from its north chapel. He was the elder son of Richard II.'s friend, and died in 1415. He wears the armour of the time and clasps his wife's hand. It adds to our interest in this monument to know that the original contract for its construction still exists and is printed in " Robert Halstead's " folio. It was ordered by the widow, Katharine Greene, of a firm of alabaster carvers at Chellaston near Derby, where the material was quarried. In the fifteenth century these Derbyshire alabaster works were famous, and examples of its productions are found not only in England but also over the whole of Western Europe. Messrs. Thomas Prentys and Robert Sutton, the artists in this instance, seem to have carried out their instructions to the letter, but it is remarkable that there was no stipulation as to portraiture. The faces are merely conventional and resemble those of several other effigies by the same hands. The ornamental alabaster arch which once rose over the tomb has vanished. In the north chapel are monuments to Mary Lady Mordaunt (1705) and her second husband, Sir John Germain (1718), and there is also a brass plate commemorating Sir John's second wife Lady Betty (1769), who, however, did not die at Drayton but at her house in London.

In the south chapel are the monuments of Sir Henry Greene (1467) and his wife, of Edward Stafford, second earl of Wiltshire (1499), and of Charles Sackville Germain, last Duke of Dorset and elder son of Lord George (1843). Later on, when we get to Green's Norton, we shall find that another set of splendid tombs belonging to this " monumental " family once existed there.

Retracing our steps to Harper's Brook and remounting the hill on the other side we are at Islip, one of the chief seats of the Northamptonshire iron industry, the two others being Wellingborough and Corby. The native ironstone had been worked by the Romans, and traces of its use are found as late as the early thirteenth century, but after that we hear no more of iron-smelting till the industry was resuscitated in the middle

of the last century, when the Wellingborough works were started by Messrs. Butlin. The furnaces at Islip are on the hill to the west of the village and have not spoilt its beauty. It still has a well kept, well built air about it, and the Northamptonshire chimney—two or three chimneys in one stack with a "wind-break" or hollow between them—is abundant.

The church with its graceful spire stands in the higher part of the village and is remarkable for its fine modern organ gallery and chancel screen of carved oak. The former is at the west end, and is decidedly in the right place for a church of moderate size. The usual practice of thrusting the organ into a chancel chapel or into an excrescence specially constructed for it may be convenient, but the effect is often very awkward and unsightly. The church contains two monuments of interest to the citizens of the United States: one is a tablet, dated 1624, to the memory of Mary, the wife of Sir John Washington of Thrapston, whose nephew, another John Washington, emigrated to America in 1657, and was the great-grandfather of the first President; the other, a modern brass, illustrates the family piety of the men of the new country towards their forefathers in the old. The story is as follows: One day the present rector received a visit from some Americans who had been led to visit the place by a mention of an ancestor of theirs in Bridges's History of the county. This was John Nicoll, "a god man to Gode and to Holy Church," who seems to have been a member of the Grocers' Company as well as a native of Islip, and who died in 1467:

> His sowle is passed to God full evyn
> In the year of our Lord 1467.

The brass from which these lines are taken existed in Bridges's time, and contained the portrait of a woman, Anne, John Nicoll's wife, and a twelve lined inscription of which he gives a copy. Long before the visit of his descendants, however, John Nicoll's brass had disappeared and, had it not been for Bridges, nothing would ever have been known of it. But the strangers were not to be daunted, and Islip has reason to bless the day

of their visitation. On August 31st, 1911, the new brass, the carved oak chancel screen, the reredos, and other adornments were dedicated to the glory of God and in pious memory of Matthias Nicoll, Mayor of New York, 1671.

North of Islip lies a cluster of villages which owe no small part of their fame to their association with one of the greater names in our literature. John Dryden, though a Londoner by choice or necessity, never forgot the pleasant meadows by the Nene, which his earliest recollections had made dear to him, and to the end of his life he kept up his connection with his relatives here. His home was at Tichmarsh, where his father, a younger son of the first baronet of Canons Ashby, had settled. Here he had married into the leading family of the place, the Pickerings, who resided at the great house. His wife was Mary, first cousin of Sir Gilbert, the head of the family, and daughter of Henry Pickering, rector of Aldwincle All Saints, and it was at her father's rectory that in 1631 John, the eldest of her fourteen children, was born. An alliance between the Drydens and the Pickerings was the more natural that both families were strongly Puritan, and took the side of the Parliament in the Civil War. Sir Gilbert Pickering, sat in the Long Parliament for his county, and was one of the Protector's Council and also of his House of Lords. He was also a member of the High Court of Justice at the King's trial, though he withdrew from it before sentence was pronounced. Fortunately for himself, he had married a sister of the Earl of Sandwich, thanks to whose mediation at Court he escaped the most extreme penalties at the Restoration, and the veracious Pepys records that he received from Lady Pickering "wrapped up in paper £5 in silver," to use his influence with "my Lord."

His brother John raised the "Pickering regiment" for the Parliament among his Northamptonshire neighbours and distinguished himself at Naseby and elsewhere. Another brother, Edward, was a lawyer and is characterised by Roger North as "a subtle fellow, a money-hunter, a great trifler, and avaricious, but withal a great pretender to puritanism, frequenting the Rolls'

Chapel, and most busily writing the sermon in his hat that he might not be seen." Pepys too had but a poor opinion of him, "a coxcomb as he always was," and "a fool." Sir Gilbert's uncle Henry, the rector of Aldwincle, died before the war broke out, and we do not know how far he shared the puritan tendencies of his relations, but another uncle, "John Pykering physitian," lived till 1659 and lies buried in Aldwincle church. His epitaph composed by himself seven years before his death shows the serious vein of the family:

Reader thov art sick to death, more danger in
Thy sovle ye less thov feelst pvrge ovt of thy sin
Oh seeke to live (I stvdied cures) and fovnd
Christ's pretiovs blood best balm for every wound
Deare eye pervse, reforme, redeem, fulfill
My lines thy life thy tyme, God's holy will.
Abi Viator.

The Pickerings we shall meet again later on; we now come back to the poet and his Northamptonshire connections. At Pilton his parents were married, as the register to this day records. At Oundle, and afterwards in her widowhood at Barnwell All Saints, resided his second cousin Elizabeth Creed, at Cotterstock in after years Mrs. Creed's daughter, Mrs. Steward of the Hall, and across the Huntingdonshire border at Chesterton that sporting character, another John Driden (as he wrote himself), glorious John's first cousin. It was while visiting his "honour'd cousin" at Cotterstock in his last years that he wrote a portion of his *Fables*, just as, if an unconfirmed tradition is worth anything, he had written part of *The Hind and the Panther* at distant Rushton.

Our road from Islip to the Aldwincles takes us past Thorpe Waterville, so called from the family who owned it at the time of the Great Survey in order to distinguish it from Thorpe Achurch, another hamlet in the same parish. Here, if we are interested in such things, we may spend an hour in trying to trace out the moats and mounds of the capital mansion of the Watervilles, for the barn end with its corbelled chimney shaft

and circular windows is much later than their time, and was perhaps the work of the Lovels, who had another fortified dwelling across the valley at Tichmarsh, the site of which was examined some years since by Sir Henry Dryden. But it is doubtful how far either of these buildings could ever have been properly dignified as a castle; indeed the only stone castle on this side of the county of which any considerable portion remains is at Barnwell St. Andrew, where we shall find the curtain of a keepless fortification of the time of Henry III. still standing.

From Thorpe a pleasant byway crosses the Nene over an ancient bridge and soon brings us to the twin villages of Aldwincle All Saints and Aldwincle St. Peter. The delightful old world cottages line the long village street from end to end, and there is nothing to show where the one parish ends and the other begins. For church purposes they are indeed practically one, and the old thatched rectory of All Saints, where Dryden was born, on our right as we enter the village, is now let as a private house. Opposite to it is the church, which has a peculiar charm of its own, and must on no account be left unvisited. Absolute contentment is the predominating feeling on entering, and I think this is due to three causes, first, of course, the gracefulness of its proportions and the beauty of its details, secondly the fact that it escaped restoration till the days when such work as was required was done wisely, and, thirdly, the entire absence of all those transitory trappings which are unavoidable in a building constantly in use. Chiefly of the Decorated and Perpendicular periods, it retains some Early English features, for example, the bases of the piers of the north arcade. The lofty nave and lean-to aisles are fitted with good modern benches, and the spacious well lighted chancel is flanked on the south by a Perpendicular chantry chapel, and on the north by a Decorated vestry. Vestries, by the way, seem to have been a somewhat uncommon feature in the English country church, but we shall see another very fine example later on at Rushton The west tower with its four tall pinnacles is a very fine

example of late Perpendicular, and the churchyard has some quaint epitaphs ; one a barbarous Latin pun,

Cor petit astra poli. Pus jacet in tumulo

and having a heart carved within the *o* of *cor*, is no longer to be found, but if you will look at the gravestone commemorating James and Thomas Bellamy, 1823 and 1827, you will find a long quotation from the verse of Edward Young, beginning with the arresting words " Beware, Lorenzo."

And now for Aldwincle St. Peter, which can also boast its man of letters, to wit, Thomas Fuller, who was born at the rectory house in 1608, not, however, the present house, but the old one which was pulled down by the first Lord Lilford about the end of the eighteenth century. This nobleman, by the way, seems to have had a passion for clearing his estates of what he considered useless encumbrances ; at any rate, he swept away not only Fuller's birthplace, but also the old church at Lilford and the two ancient mansions (the Manor house and the Grove) at Tichmarsh. Of Thomas Fuller, seeing that there is nothing to relate of him in connection with Aldwincle save that he was born and bred here, I need say no more. Writers are wont to patronise him as " old Fuller," but picture him not as a grey-bearded patriarch, for in point of fact he died at the tolerably early age of 53. There is, indeed, one passage in his writings—it occurs in *Mixt Contemplations in better Times*, printed in 1660, the year preceding his death—in which he mentions his native place, " where my father was the painful preacher of St. Peter's," and it might be the proper thing to transcribe the whole, but this I am not going to do ; the reader who has not access to the original will find it in the excellent Handbook to Northamptonshire.[1]

The church has one of the most beautiful of the lesser spires (a broach) of the county, and the string course on the tower with birds and small animals clinging to it feet upwards is curious. The arcades of the nave have elaborately carved capitals, the

[1] Murray's *Handbook for Northamptonshire and Rutland*, Ed. 2, p. 44.

western pier on the north side being distinguished from the rest by a square abacus with heads and foliage beneath it. The border in the glass of one of the south windows in the chancel has white dogs and yellow hares arranged alternately. The dogs are supposed to have reference to the Lovels, who, as we have seen, were a powerful family in the neighbourhood :

The Cat, the Rat and Lovel the dog
Rule all England under the hog.

Wadenhoe Church.

So runs the popular lampoon referring to Richard III. and his three friends, William Catesby,[1] Sir Richard Ratcliffe, and Francis Viscount Lovel, who was slain (or disappeared ?) at the battle of Stoke.

There is a delightful walk across the fields and through the woods by the riverside to Wadenhoe, where the church stands in proud isolation on a knoll separated from the village by a deep ravine. A Wadenhoe funeral must be an impressive sight ; for the coffin must be carried down the grim village street over the

[1] See *post*, p. 290.

brook and up the winding church path to its last resting-place on the hilltop. I feel sure, however, that this church was not always so secluded from the living. Instances of the recession of the village from its church are common enough, and I doubt if any parish church was ever planted in absolute solitude. Examine the surroundings carefully and you will soon make out traces of entrenchment in the field to the west, and certain irregularities and embankments to the north-east, all pointing to the presence of habitations of some importance now swept away. The church itself has a substantial saddle-back tower, and seems to be mainly Early English, though here and there traces of earlier work may be detected. It was carefully repaired about 1906, and the new seats are of good plain oak ; in the aisles the old bench-ends remain. The eighteenth century chancel with its coved ceiling is rather narrower than the original one, and is lighted by four lancets and a two-light east window. On the south side is a curious vestry with two round-headed arches close to the floor as you enter it from the church. The font too is worth inspection with its varied adornments of dog-tooth, roses, stiff-foliage, and two human heads.

Away to the north-west towards Brigstock are extensive woods, which we shall survey from the opposite side by and by, but if the wanderer has plenty of time at his disposal, before he accompanies me to Lilford and Tichmarsh, he may find his way through them on foot to Lyveden New Bield, of which more anon. An episode connected with these woods a couple of years before the rising of 1745 created great excitement throughout the whole countryside, and threw some light upon the Highland temperament. The companies of Highlanders which had been raised after the '15 under the name of the Black Watch (now the Royal Highlanders) had recently been formed into a regiment, and in the early months of 1743, much against the inclinations of the men, who were under the impression that they were not to be called upon to serve outside their own country, they were moved up to London. Here they were victimised by Jacobite conspirators who persuaded them that the Govern-

ment intended to transport them for life to the plantations. This was the last straw, and the greater part resolved to steal off home again. On the night of the 14th of May they started, but they took care to keep off the main roads, and march wherever possible under the cover of the woodlands. Nothing was heard of them for five days, but at last it became known that they had taken up their quarters in the woods to the south-west of Oundle, and General Blakeney arrived from Northampton to reduce them to obedience. The men stipulated for a free pardon, but the General swore that they must surrender unconditionally or be cut to pieces. In this predicament the Highlanders began to draw in their horns, and first in small parties of ten or fifteen and finally in a body they all came over. No mercy was shown to them ; straight back to London they were marched, tried by court-martial and condemned to be shot. Justice being thus satisfied, the extreme penalty was only inflicted in three cases. But one at least of the men had already perished in the Northamptonshire woods, and a spot now under the plough was long pointed out by the rustics as the soldier's grave.

By this time Wadenhoe is a couple of miles behind us ; we have crossed the Nene by Lilford bridge and are looking at the fine Jacobean front of Lilford Hall. Jacobean—I use the term generically, and if I am to be precise I must say Caroline, for the house was built by the Elmes family in 1635 and did not come into the hands of its present owners till 1711, when it was bought by Sir Thomas Powys, the Attorney-General of James II., and the prosecuting counsel at the trial of the seven bishops, when, as Burnet allows, " he acted his part as fairly as his post could admit of." He was afterwards raised to the Bench, and his monumental tomb with a long inscription composed by Matthew Prior—Justice reclining between Religion and Eloquence—once set up in the destroyed church of Lilford, has now travelled up the hill to Achurch. The three fine gables in the Tudor-Renaissance style set off against a long colonnade of chimneys of the true Northamptonshire sort, the two side gables rising above imposing semicircular bays two storeys

high, and the centre relieved by a balustraded porch of great dignity, constitute a *tout ensemble* seen to great advantage from the road where we are now standing. The beautiful park which slopes to the Nene contains a famous collection of birds formed by the fourth Lord Lilford. The labours of this accomplished ornithologist are well known to all bird lovers, and he who wanders into the woods beside the river will soon become aware that he has entered one of the privileged sanctuaries of wild life.

We are now on the eastern side of the river, and hereabouts some hours must be spent before we cross it again to our head-quarters at Oundle, for I now mean to turn southwards again as far as Tichmarsh, and then to make to the north for the Barnwells and Polebrook. Thorpe Achurch is chiefly memorable for having had as its rector for forty years that turbulent enthusiast, Robert Browne, from whom the Brownists, the earliest of our nonconforming sects, took their name. A collateral descendant of the munificent founder of Browne's Hospital at Stamford, and born at the ancestral home of Tolethorpe in Rutland, he came of a good family. After sundry collisions with the authorities both at Cambridge and as master of St. Olave's School in Southwark, he was ordained in 1591, on being presented to the livings of Little Casterton, where Tolethorpe Hall is situated, and Thorpe Achurch. Something like a quarter of a century of tolerable submission followed, but he then broke forth again, and brought down upon his head the successive penalties of suspension, sequestration, and excommunication. Nevertheless, after a contentious existence of several years' duration he is again found at Achurch, as pertinacious as ever, till in 1633, in consequence of a quarrel with a parishioner, he was lodged in Northampton gaol. Thither he was carried on a feather bed flung into a cart, "he himself," says Fuller, "being too infirm (above eighty) to go, and too unwieldy to ride, and no friend so favourable as to purchase for him a more comely conveyance." In gaol he died and was buried at St. Giles's.

Having now crossed the railway at Thorpe Station we make

for the church tower on the hill above, and are soon at Tichmarsh. The rectory with its famous cedar, nearly 200 years old,[1] and its boughs touching a circumference of 106 yards, is now the only house of note in the place, but, as we have already seen, there were formerly two others, the Tudor mansion of the Pickerings and the Grove. Of the latter house I have nothing to tell—it may

Tichmarsh Church.

or it may not have been the dwelling place of Erasmus Dryden and the home of the poet's boyhood, but the former was to the south of the church where a fine elm is said to mark its site. The Pickerings purchased the estate in the middle of the sixteenth century, and what remains to be said of them may as

[1] It was planted by William Nichols in 1744, and was damaged by the gale of March, 1916; its height is 74 feet.

well be said here. In 1613 died Sir Gilbert Pickering, Knight, the grandfather of the Sir Gilbert Pickering, baronet, whose acquaintance we have already made. The knight himself, like the rest of his family, was a zealous Protestant, and was particularly active in hunting out the suspected persons in his neighbourhood after the discovery of Gunpowder Plot. But he had a brother-in-law who was actually one of the conspirators. This was one Robert Keyes, who had been living as a kind of retainer with the Mordaunts at Turvey and perhaps also at Drayton. Only a few days before the blow was to have been struck Keyes happened to be at Tichmarsh in the company of other guests of Sir Gilbert, when, says Fuller, who no doubt had the story from the Pickering family in after years, he "suddenly whipped-out his sword, and in merriment made many offers therewith at the heads, necks, and sides of many gentlemen and gentlewomen then in his company. This was taken as a mere frolic, and for the present passed accordingly; but afterwards when the treason was discovered, such as remembered his gestures thought thereby that he did *act* what he intended to *do* if the plot had taken effect; hack and hew, kill and slay all eminent persons of a different religion from themselves." Such was "the apish behaviour of Keyes." Three months later, with Fawkes, Thomas Winter and Rokewood, he was executed at Westminster.

The connection between the two Puritan families of Dryden and Pickering was a double one. Not only did a Dryden, as we have already seen, take to wife a Pickering, but a Pickering took to wife a Dryden, and from this latter alliance descended two ladies, with the elder of whom we must at once make acquaintance, the younger we shall meet with afterwards. But first let us pay the honour due to the stately tower of Tichmarsh, probably one of that splendid series of Perpendicular buildings hereabouts which grew up under the patronage of the House of York at Fotheringhay, and then we may enter the church, and make our bow to Mistress Elizabeth Creed. For of the strange series of monumental inscriptions which now meets our eye she

is the only begetter, and before we have finished our visit to the villages roundabout we shall have to own that she has literally left her mark upon the neighbourhood.

Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Gilbert Pickering (the grandson of the relative of Robert Keyes) and Elizabeth Montagu, was one of the most prominent figures in the local society of her day. Born in the year that King Charles set up his standard at Nottingham (she lived to a good old age and died in 1725), at the Restoration Mrs. Betty Pickering, as Pepys calls her, the daughter of a baronet and the niece of an earl, would, it might be supposed, have had no lack of eligible suitors for her hand. But whether it was owing to the political tendencies of her family, at that time particularly out of favour, or to some primness in the deportment of the lady herself, we do not hear of any candidates entering the field, though Mr. Pepys was one day seized (at church, of all places) with the notion of making a match for her with "Mr. Hill, my friend the merchant, that loves musique and comes to me a' Sundays, a most ingenious and sweet-natured and highly accomplished person." A few days later, however, he seems to have given up the idea; after all, his ingenious friend was hardly well enough off "to make a fortune for Mrs. Pickering." It was, of course, his intimate relations with the Montagus that made him so interested in the future of a niece of the house, and he could not conceal his chagrin when, shortly afterwards, he discovered that a pretender had appeared in the person of an acquaintance of his, whose name is one of those which occur most frequently in his pages, and of whom, as a rule, he speaks without much respect. This was John Creed, a native of Oundle, who had begun life as a retainer in Sir Edward Montagu's family. Sir Edward was now Earl of Sandwich, and Creed had been appointed secretary to the Commission for Tangier, of which both the earl and Pepys were members. Mr. Pepys was probably jealous of the secretary's influence with "my Lord," and he was therefore the less inclined to be pleased when one day he was informed by "my Lady" that "Creed had broke his desire to her of being a servant

to Mrs. Betty Pickering, and placed it upon encouragement which he had from some discourse of her ladyship, commending of her virtues to him, which, poor lady, she meant most innocently. She did give him a cold answer, but not so severe as it ought to have been ; and it seems, as the lady since to my Lady confesses, he had wrote a letter to her, which she answered slightly, and was resolved to contemn any motion of his therein. My Lady takes the thing very ill, as it is fit she should ; but I advise her to stop all future occasions of the world's taking notice of his coming thither so often as of late he hath done. But to think that he should have this devilish presumption to aime at a lady so near to my Lord is strange, both for his modesty and discretion." Nevertheless, the presumptuous suitor persevered, and three years later the wedding took place—" a thing I could never have expected."

After a married life of over thirty years Mrs. Creed was left a widow in 1701 ; she does not seem to have had any reason to repent her choice of a husband, and one of her inscriptions in Tichmarsh church informs us that he was " a wise, learned, and pious man, who served his Majesty King Charles the Second in diverse honourable employments at home and abroad ; lived with honour and died lamented." Her eldest son, Major Richard Creed, was slain at Blenheim, her daughter Elizabeth is the younger lady we shall meet later. Many years of her widowhood she spent in the manor-house at Barnwell All Saints, which she rented of the Montagus. Family tradition related that here " she amused and employed herself in painting, and instructing many young women in drawing, fine needle-works and other elegant arts. Many of the churches in the neighbourhood of Oundle are decorated with altar-pieces, monuments and ornaments of different kinds, the works of her hand ; and her descendants are possessed of many portraits, and some good pictures painted by her. Two days in every week she constantly allotted to the publick : on one she was visited by all the nobility and gentry who resided near her ; on the other, she received and relieved all the afflicted and diseased of every rank, giving them food,

raiment, or medicine according to their wants,"[1]—she might indeed have sat for the portrait of Farquhar's Lady Bountiful. A portrait which she painted of her uncle, the Earl of Sandwich, still hangs at Drayton; her "altar-pieces" have, I suspect, failed to survive the scathing criticism of modern taste, but her inscriptions remain, the most notable being the sixty-four lines at Tichmarsh, written in the eightieth year of her age, wherein she commemorates her pious ancestors, and in particular:

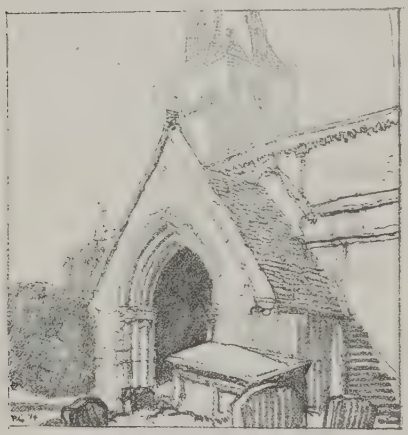
John Dryden, Esq.,
the celebrated Poet and Laureat of his time.
His bright parts and learning are best seen in his
own excellent writings on various subjects.
We boast, that he was bred and had
his first learning here;
where he has often made us happie
by his kind visits and most delightfull conversation.
He married the Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter to
Henry[2] Earl of Berkshire; by whom he had three
sons, Charles, John, and Erasmus-Henry[3];
and, after 70 odd yeares, when nature could be no
longer supported, he received the notice of
his approaching dissolution
with sweet submission and entire resignation
to the Divine Will;
and he took so tender and obliging a farewell of
his friends, as none but he himself could have
expressed; of which sorrowfull number
I was one.
His body was honourably interred in Westminster
Abby, among the greatest wits of divers ages.

"This excellent woman," to use Malone's expression, lived for three years after setting up this inscription, and was buried in this church, as a marble urn at the west end of the south aisle records.

So on to the Barnwells, two picturesque villages, now for all

[1] Malone's *Life of Dryden*, vol. i, pt. 1, p. 340.
[2] An error for Thomas, first earl, died 1669.
[3] Fifth baronet of Canons Ashby.

intents one, lying in a well-wooded country, and containing many attractive cottages and neatly-kept gardens. In the chancel of the church of All Saints—the only part left standing—the traveller will find another of Mrs. Creed's inscriptions, and in that of St. Andrew a coloured bust of "Parson Lathom," an Elizabethan rector of the parish noted for his good works and charitable foundations. But Barnwell's rarest feature in a land where churches are many and castles are few is the shell of the thirteenth century fortress already mentioned. There is a square enclosure with trefoil towers at the angles, and a gateway flanked by drum towers, and to the north-west by the brook are some earthworks and a double ditch marking the site of an earlier fortification. The stone castle was built by Berenger le Moyne about 1264, and a few years later came into the possession of the abbot of Ramsey, with whose successors it remained till the Dissolution; it was then purchased by Henry VIII.'s Chief Justice, Sir Edward Montagu, from whom descended all the various titled branches of that name.



Barnwell St. Andrew Church.

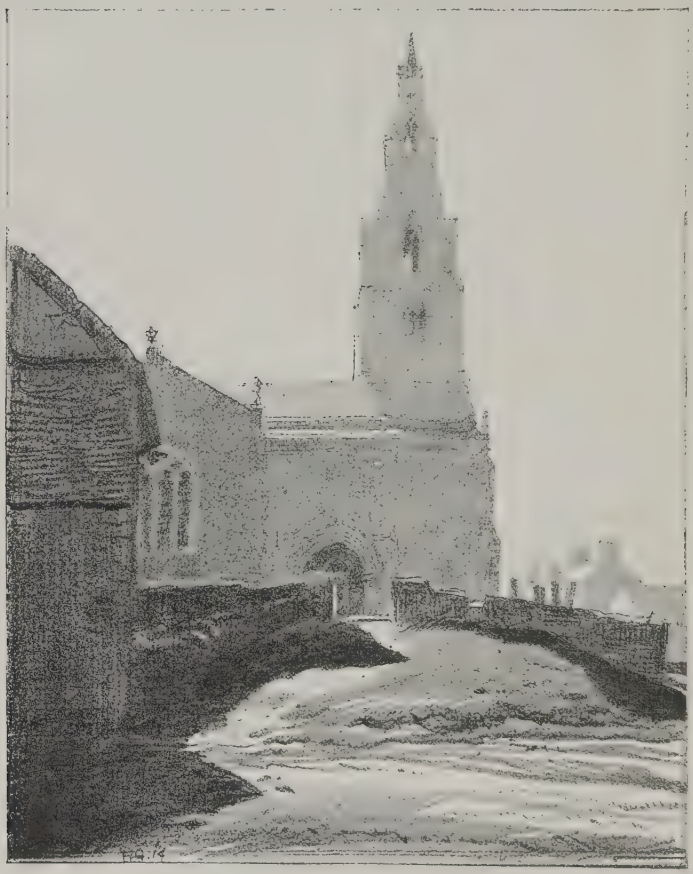
From the castle there is a charming walk across the fields to Polebrook, the spire of which forms a landmark, though it does not come into sight till you have, if you take our footpath, crossed the wooded ridge of Armston—Armston itself, a small collection of houses, has a manifest savour of antiquity, and a reference to Bridges reveals the fact that there were two religious foundations here, one a chapel of St. Leonard with a resident

chaplain—probably a chapel-of-ease to Polebrook, and the other a hospital for a master and brethren founded in 1232 by Ralph de Trubleville and his wife and dedicated to the honour of St. John Baptist. This foundation, of course, had its own chapel, on the chancel steps of which every Sunday stood with his face to the congregation some brother of the hospital or other proper person appointed thereunto, and with a loud voice bade them of their charity say one Pater Noster and one Ave Maria for the souls of Roger de Beaumis, of his ancestors, and of all faithful people. Roger was a benefactor who had given land to the hospital on condition of this observance. The chaplain and

Barnwell Castle.

brothers were to be dressed in a religious habit of russet cloth with a pastoral staff in red cloth on the breast. Some trifling remnant of these buildings, whether those of St. Leonard or St. John, seems to have existed in Bridges's day: at any rate, he saw, in one of the four houses of which Armston then consisted, "four large windows resembling chapel windows, a high arched roof within, and at one end without, two columns, one of which is entire, having a broad capital like a pedestal for a statue." So down the hill to Polebrook, now plainly visible, while high up on Ashton Wold, famous of old for the Large Blue (*Lycaena Arion*), to the right of the village is the splendid modern house

of the Hon. Nathaniel Charles Rothschild, known to the rustics emphatically as " the mansion."



Polebrook.

The church shares with its neighbours at Oundle and Warmington the distinction of possessing some of the finest Early English work in the county. Though the greater part of the present

building is of that period, it is an expansion of a smaller cruciform church with, in all probability, a central tower, and of this earlier building the chancel arch and the north arcade with its round arches formed a part. The body of the church is very wide for its length—a point which will at once strike the visitor on entering the building. Other noticeable features of the plan are the long north transept with an internal arcading on its west and north sides, and the position of the steeple, which fills up the angle formed by the western termination of the south aisle and the westernmost bay of the nave. A modern vestry has been built against the north wall of the chancel, but this does not interfere with the beauty of the interior with its fine thirteenth century east window of three lancets.

Near the inn the road makes a sharp turn to the left and soon takes us down to the river, and so to the long bridge close to Oundle station. On the right before we get to the station is the hamlet of Ashton where Mrs. Creed's younger daughter, Jemima, built a chapel and school-house under one roof—it is hardly necessary to add that the altar-piece of the chapel was painted by her mother.

CHAPTER IV

OUNDLE—BENEFIELD—BRIGSTOCK—LYVEDEN—WARMINGTON—FOTHERINGHAY—TANSOR—COTTERSTOCK—WANSFORD.

STATELY Stamford is one of the glories of Lincolnshire and as such is outside the limits of this volume, and although that portion of it which lies to the south of the Welland, with the proud title of Stamford Baron, belongs to our county, yet I shall not scruple to hail the little town we have now reached as the most delightful in Northamptonshire. The two towns are only a dozen miles apart, and you may, if you please, picture Oundle to yourself as a satellite of the larger planet shot southwards to the rising ground above the Nene. The clean, quiet streets, the solid, unpretentious shops, the absence of bustle and feverish display, and above all the dignity of the many grey substantial houses of the last three centuries are all suggestive of its opulent neighbour; and in its church, which stands in a spacious churchyard at the eastern extremity of the main street, it has a rival to any one of the many that the town on the Welland can boast. Its lofty, crocketed spire is visible for miles around, and the adventurous schoolboys who upon two several occasions took advantage of the crockets to climb to the summit must have had a glorious view far and wide over level meadow and waving wood. Originally a small Norman church like Polebrook, with a central tower, it was enlarged in the thirteenth century, and to this period the main fabric now belongs. The central tower was not removed till late in the fourteenth century, when the present western tower and spire were built. The

spire is therefore of the same date as that of Higham, and seems to have shared the same ups and downs of fortune. For in the thirties of the seventeenth century it was found necessary to rebuild both, Higham taking the lead, and it is likely enough that the same masons after completing their work there came on to do similar work here.[1]

But with the towers of the two churches there is no question of similitude. That of Oundle is at the very least a century

North Street, Oundle.

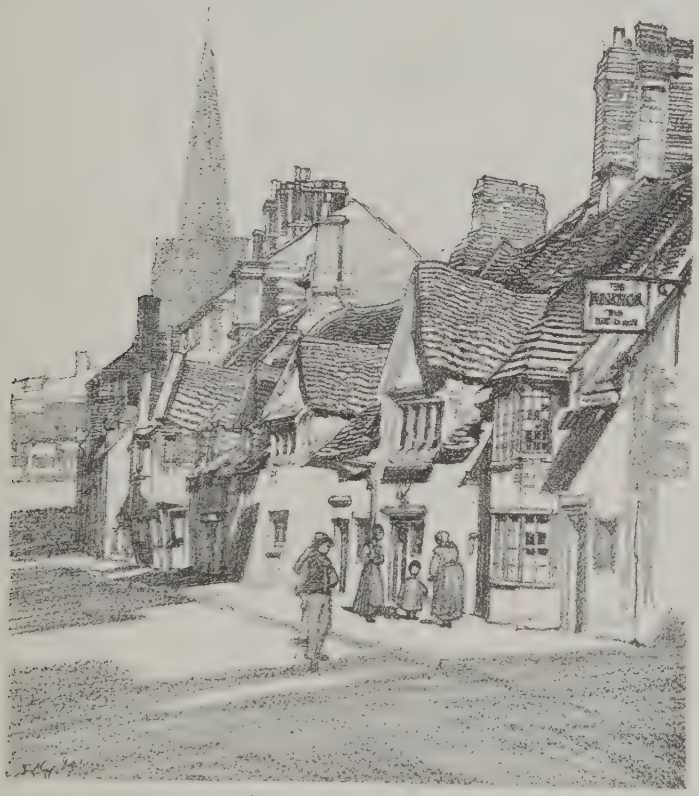
later than the other; the turrets at the angles recall those of Kettering, and their solidity is a marked contrast to the graceful pinnacles and flying buttressss of Higham. Here again there are no strong contrasts of light and shadow, the long, slender buttresses and the tall three light, shallow-set belfry windows proclaim the advent of the Perpendicular style. The beauty of the interior has been marred by the scraping of the walls of the nave and transepts. It is impossible to believe that mediæval builders ever intended to expose a bare surface

[1] The part above the upper tier of lights of the Oundle spire had to be rebuilt again in 1874.

of *rough* masonry to the eye, and restorers have often made matters worse by pointing up the joints till the effect is that of a zigzag puzzle. Very interesting features are the late fourteenth century coloured pulpit (we shall see another at Fotheringhay) and the fifteenth century eagle lectern. The four piers at the crossing are in substance those which supported the central tower.

To the outside world Oundle is best known for the great school maintained by the Grocers' Company. The magnificent buildings which the Company has erected would give distinction to any town. One of the latest and finest blocks contains the great hall, library, and art room, another the engineering shops which did such good service in the war. Yet the school began in quite a small way, and even up to the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century was nothing more than a reputable country school with something over one hundred boys. But in 1876 a new chapter in its history opened; the Company put out a new scheme under which the original grammar school became a second grade school for the sons of farmers and tradesmen, while under the title of The Oundle School a new offshoot of the old stock was established on the lines of the greater Public Schools. How a small country town came to be connected with a wealthy City Company remains to be told, though the reader who can call to mind the parallel histories of certain other schools will easily guess. Towards the end of the fifteenth century—the exact date is unknown and a wide margin must therefore be allowed—there was born at Oundle a boy whose name is now more familiar in the town than that of any other of its sons. It is possible that William Laxton was educated at the very school of which he afterwards became so munificent a benefactor as to take rank par excellence as its founder. Strange to say, however, next to nothing is known of his history beyond what is recorded by Fuller, namely, that "he was bred a grocer in London, where he so prospered by his painefull endeavours that he was chosen Lord Mayor A.D. 1544." Shortly before his death in 1556 he devised lands

in the City of London to the Company of which he was a member for the purpose of maintaining the school at Oundle under "an honest, virtuous, and learned Schoolmaster, being a Master



St. Osyth's Lane, Oundle.

of Arts . . . and an honest learned person to be Usher." Thus the old grammar school attached to a gild for two priests founded more than fifty years previously by Joan Wyat [1] was

[1] Probably the same Joan Wyat who, with her husband Robert Wyat, is said to have built the handsome south porch of the church.

re-established on a new footing; for by this time the gild had been dissolved under the Acts of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. for the suppression of such foundations. The second grade school is now known as "Sir William Laxton's Grammar School," and one of the new boarding-houses of the great school is called Laxton House. In the event of further extensions perhaps the name of the original foundress might be perpetuated in a "Wyat House."

Oundle is situated in the centre of the eastern side of the delightful, undulating, wooded district stretching from Kettering to Wansford—over which, as we have already hinted, the happy wanderer may roam for many a day, and for many a day we must leave him to stray hither and thither as he will beyond the limits of a modest volume like ours. For us, one excursion west and one north; and we pass to other scenes.

Westward it is a pleasant ride along the Weldon road through the glades of Biggin Hall to Benefield. Now, in mid-autumn, the cottage gardens are gay with flowers, and the entrance to Benefield would be a tempting subject for a painter. But with our day's work before us we must not linger over it, so we climb the hill to the church to find it richly kept, but chiefly a rebuilding of the last century. The modern rood loft and the rood beam supporting the crucifix with the attendant saints—for more than three centuries a sight strange to English eyes—straightway give us pause. For the rest the beautiful panelled ceiling of the fourteenth century chancel relieved with bosses and painted with the stars of heaven is the most interesting feature. The nave was originally Early English, and the piers, their capitals ornamented with the characteristic foliage and dog-tooth, remain.

The road now bears to the south-west through Brigstock or Farming Wood forest, which had its own "master" as late as 1750, but was, of course, merely a subdivision of the great forest of Rockingham. On the right is the house of Farming Woods, before 1841 the home of the hospitable Ladies Fitzpatrick. An air from those piping times of peace might have

reached us at Aldwincle All Saints, had we read on the nave floor the inscription to their *chef de cuisine*, one Heinekey. In Heath's *Book of Beauty* for 1836—a well-known annual of its day—appeared a tale[1] by one of the most prominent figures of the social world, the pugnacious Grantley Berkeley, dedicated " with the highest esteem and respect " to these worthy ladies. We are here in the heart of the Woodland Pytchley country, the northern quarter of the old Pytchley, but since 1876 hunted by a separate pack. The kennels are at Brigstock, and a favourite meet is the village square in front of the old " Three Cocks " Inn at which we have now arrived.

After a light lunch we will stroll down to the bridge over Harpers Brook, when a pleasant walk of four miles across the fields might take us to Geddington (it is five miles and a half round by the road through Stanion), but Geddington and its famous cross must be left, like Yarrow, unvisited, for the present. So much indeed have we to do before we see Oundle spire again, that we must not even turn aside to see the stone which marks the spot where once grew the " Bocase Tree," a forest landmark famous throughout the countryside. Popular etymology has, of course, invented the most absurd interpretations of Bocase, a word which a writer in *Notes and Queries* connects with the old French *bochasse*, a wild chestnut, and if a chestnut it was, in old times a rarer tree than now, one can understand that the foreign name may have clung to it.[2]

In the village square of Brigstock is the cross, the shaft of which dates from 1586, and which now commemorates three queens regnant of England "E.R. 1586 : A.R. 1705 : V.R. 1887." The church

[1] " *Francis Tresham of Rushton, the Gunpowder Plot Conspirator.*"

[2] Prof. Montagu Burrows in his *Family of Brocas* suggested that *Bocase* may be a corruption of *Brocas*, and that the Brocas tree got its name from its having been a favourite meet of the Royal Buckhounds, of which the Brocas family were the hereditary masters.

Another suggestion is that the tree marked the spot where the foresters and keepers assembled for archery practice, the long narrow field within a short distance being still known as *The Bowcast*. *Northamptonshire Notes and Queries*. N.S. vol. ii.

has grown on to a low Saxon tower with the usual long and short work at the angles. How it was originally finished off is doubtful, but for some six or seven centuries it has supported an upper stage and broach of the familiar type. The peculiar feature of

Brigstock Church.

the tower is the semicircular stair turret or vice added to the west side, the only other example of which in this county we shall find at Brixworth.[1] The effect is as if one of the round towers of Norfolk or Suffolk had coalesced with a tower of the

[1] Lincolnshire has two, Hough-on-the-Hill and Broughton.

ordinary shape. Whenever the addition was made it increased the available space in the interior of the building, and we can imagine the villagers finding it a convenient and fencible refuge during the Danish forays.

On our return to Oundle we take the lower road by Lyveden Manor. The *den* or *dene* in this case is watered by a tiny brook which comes down from Farming Woods and joins the Nene just above Oundle. The Manor house, which, since the erection of the " new " unfinished house to the south of it, has been known as Lyveden Old Bield, is now uninhabited, but it was formerly a residence of the Treshams—a name famous in this part of the county. Their principal home was at Rushton, nine miles away—a place which we shall visit later on, but to talk of Lyveden is to talk of Sir Thomas Tresham, and the reader must therefore be introduced to the family forthwith.

The first Tresham of any note was Attorney-General to Henry V., and, in the time of Henry VI., three times Speaker of the House of Commons. During the Wars of the Roses his son Thomas was also elected Speaker ; he fought for King Henry at Tewkesbury, was taken prisoner, and beheaded. Under Queen Mary Thomas Tresham, grandson of the last, was made Prior of the revived Order of St. John of Jerusalem. His monument is at Rushton, and it is with *his* grandson, Sir Thomas Tresham, that we are now concerned. Converted from the Established faith in 1580, he became an ardent Romanist, and like other adherents of the Catholic cause in those days he found himself a prisoner more than once. He belonged, however, to the loyal section of the English Catholics, and had nothing to say to the party which favoured the designs of the King of Spain. Accordingly, he spent his last years in peace and died in 1605, some two months before the collapse of Gunpowder Treason. Of this there is not the slightest reason to suppose that he had any knowledge, but the Francis Tresham whose name is for ever identified with the conspiracy, and whose letter was instrumental in its discovery, was his eldest son. His second son, Lewis, was created a baronet, a dignity which

died with the second possessor, Sir William, in 1651. We may now come back to Lyveden and the "Old Bield."

Although known as the *old* Bield, the present house is no older than the *new* Bield, and must have been built either by Sir Thomas or his son Lewis,[1] but its claim to its distinguishing epithet may rest upon the fact that it occupies the site of an earlier manor house mentioned by Leland. It is now nothing more than a fine gabled building of moderate size, its rooms dusty and dilapidated, and its most notable feature to-day a handsome oak staircase with substantial newels and pendants. A coat of arms, probably that of Sir Lewis Tresham, and an archway, resembling those at Holdenby on a smaller scale, which formed the entrance to the court, have since 1846 been removed to Farming Woods.

Now it is beyond dispute that Sir Thomas Tresham was not only a devout Catholic but also a public-spirited country gentleman. It was as a good squire, as Fuller would have said, that he began to build the Market House at Rothwell, an undertaking which was cut short by his first imprisonment; it was as a good Catholic that he built his symbolical presentation of the doctrine of the Trinity—the Triangular Lodge at Rushton, and his symbolical presentation of our Lord's Passion—the "New Bield" at Lyveden, of which we are now in search. Death only prevented him from completing it.[1]

It is somewhat difficult to find, for although it stands in an open field, it is surrounded on almost every side by thick woods. However, from the Old Bield we make our way up the hill to find three fishponds forming three sides of a square meadow. After his death Sir Thomas's widow retired from Rushton to the Old Bield as a dower house, and the slope was laid out in terraces culminating in the ponds. At the angles of the uppermost terrace overlooking the ponds mounds have been thrown up, perhaps for the purpose of supporting small pavilions or arbours,

[1] Begun perhaps by the father and completed by the son.

[2] The best account of these three buildings is that by Mr. J. Alfred Gotch. *The Buildings of Sir Thomas Tresham*, 1883.

in the formal style of the age. Still no sign of the object of our quest, till suddenly, on rounding a corner of the woods, it bursts upon our sight—

> A naked subject to the weeping clouds,
> And waste for churlish winter's tyranny.

Grey and gaunt in its solitary grandeur, it almost seems to defy the approach of the stranger. A mere shell, cruciform, roofless, but after three centuries still a speaking testimony to the ingenious and elaborate piety of its designer. Indeed so

Lyveden New Bield.

indestructible is the masonry, the cement having become as tough as the very stones themselves, that a Major Butler in the Civil War is said to have been compelled to abandon an attempt to take down the building, and to have contented himself with cutting out the beams and transporting them to the house he was erecting for himself at Oundle.

Mr. Gotch thinks the Lyveden estate passed away from the Treshams on the death of Sir Thomas's grandson ($16\frac{50}{51}$), but in all probability this unfinished building was left to take care of itself even earlier. When I saw it in the autumn of 1913, it served as a refuge for the cattle turned to graze on the surrounding grass, but as I write, efforts are being made to

secure it for the National Trust. It is to be hoped that they will be successful, and that order and decency may be restored.

The house consists of a basement, partly below the surface of the ground, and of two storeys above. In accordance with the symbolic intention of the whole, the plan is that of a Greek cross, each arm having a five-sided bay standing out from its extremity. The lower storey of the north bay contains the entrance, otherwise all the bays on both floors are filled with windows; there is also a window on either side of each arm, one on each floor. The basement is lighted by small oblong windows separated outside by shields of arms, the carving of which was never finished. The lower frieze separating the two storeys is sculptured with the emblems of the Crucifixion; seven tablets in all, which are repeated as many times as is necessary to go round the building. The upper frieze above the windows of the upper storey shows the remains of eight Latin sentences carved in capital letters, the first on the north face of the north wing being—IESVS MVNDI SALVS and the remaining fragment of the last—GLORIARI NISI IN CRVCE DOMINI NOSTRI. A London designer,[1] in our days we should call him an architect, had already been employed on the building of two houses in the county, Holdenby and Kirby, and his assistance at Lyveden was now invoked by Sir Thomas. His plans, which are preserved in the Soane Museum, enabled Mr. Gotch to form an idea of the internal arrangements. Thus it was discovered that the southern arm of the cross contained, or was intended to contain, the staircase rising from basement to roof; the western arm contained in the basement (as, indeed, existing traces show) the kitchen and appropriate offices; above it was the Hall, and above the Hall the "Great Chamber" or Drawing-room. The other rooms on this—the uppermost—floor were probably bed-chambers. The entrance, which, as we have seen, was in the north arm, was through a porch and vestibule which still exist, though the steps leading up to them are gone. Lastly, the eastern arm of the basement contained the buttery

[1] John Thorpe.

with a parlour above it. To what purposes Sir Thomas would have put this remarkable building, had he lived to finish it, can only be a matter of surmise. Perhaps he intended to retire to it at stated periods for religious exercises and repose. It is true that no apartment in it appears expressly designed as a chapel, but any overt action of the kind was then too dangerous,

Oundle Bridge.

and Sir Thomas had had his experience. With such speculations in our thoughts we regain the lower road and make our way back to our pleasant quarters at Oundle.

Over the long bridge[1] this morning to Warmington, whence

[1] This fine bridge has recently been widened. It bears the following inscription :

In the yere of
OVRE LORD 1570
THES – ARCHES – WER
BORNE – DOVNE – BY – THE
WATERS – EXTREMYTIE –
IN – THE – YERE – OF – OVRE –
LORD – 1571 – THEY – WER –
BVLDED – AGAYN – WITH
LYME – AND – STONNE –
THANKS – BE – TO – GOD –

it is possible but not advisable to cross the boundary into Huntingdon and by means of Elton bridge to approach Fotheringhay from the north. This would, however, be the acme of perverseness, and we who know better will approach it, as it should always be approached for the first time, from the south. But a good road has now brought us to Warmington, where

Warmington.

one of the most interesting churches hereabouts demands more than a hurried visit. It is Early English throughout, and the details of the exterior are remarkably rich for a country church. Witness the elaborate details of the tower and the broach spire with its three tiers of gabled lights, the well proportioned belfry windows, the lancets of the aisles with their quatrefoil heads,

and above all the beautiful ornamentation of the porch and doorways. In the interior, an unusual feature is the groined vault of the nave (thirteenth century like the rest) executed in wood instead of stone ; the ribs rise from slender stone shafts with richly carved capitals, the shafts themselves springing from carved heads in the spandrels of the arcades. It has been suggested that this preference of wood for the material of the vaulting was due to a fear that the walls were not strong enough to resist the thrust of stone, and this may well have been the fact. At the eastern end of the north aisle is a chapel enclosed on two sides by a very fine Jacobean parclose screen now restored ; the fifteenth century chancel screen, gilt and coloured, is also a beautiful piece of work. The wooden pulpit, painted with figures, belongs to the same class as those of Oundle and Fotheringhay. It should be added that a modern organ-chamber has been built on to the extremity of the south aisle, the east window of which has thus become internal and unglazed.

Refraining of our set purpose from crossing the border into Huntingdonshire, we now bear to the north-west and as we cross the railway bridge the great fifteenth century church of Fotheringhay looms out of the grey mist of this October morning, and dominates every other feature in the landscape. Soon we have reached the fine eighteenth century (1722, to be exact) bridge over the Nene, the most considerable, except that at Wansford, between Oundle and Peterborough. Its predecessor bore an inscription to the effect that it had been built by the order of Queen Elizabeth, from which some pious Roundhead in the following century had cut out the words " God save the Queen." On our right is the site of the castle, on our left the church. Leaving the castle for the present, we bear to the left, and pass on our right one of those houses of entertainment which were thronged when Fotheringhay was the home of great and royal personages. Then the " New Inn," it is now in its altered condition a private house, but the fine gateway with its two-light window remains. The modern inn is further

Fotheringhay Church.

on beyond the church and here we may put in a respectful request for luncheon, and go in search of the church key.

Our distant view has already revealed to us a building of cathedral proportions, and with one most important reservation our expectations are fulfilled. Steeple, nave, and aisles are indeed there in all their glory, but alas ! the work is now a torso, the head, the choir has vanished. Thrift, thrift, Horatio ! What profit was there in a stately choir, when its company of priests, of clerks, and of choristers had been swept away ?

Fotheringhay.

Better pull it down, and sell the stuff for what it will fetch. The rest ? well, the rest may stand to serve as the parish church. And so stand it did, though to-day the presence of great shoring baulks of timber proclaims that unless funds can be found for the necessary repairs it may not stand for long. Thus what Edward Plantagenet builded Edward Tudor slighted.

The history then of the present church begins with the gift of Fotheringhay by Edward III. to his son Edmund of Langley, who conceived the idea of founding a college and collegiate church, but he died before he could carry it out, and the actual

founder was his son Edward, who fell at Agincourt. The older parish church now gradually disappeared. The chancel was the first to go and in its place arose the splendid choir whose loss we have to bewail. Then, some twenty years later (about 1430), the rest gave way to the splendid fabric before us. We cannot overpraise the lofty nave, its roof supported by bold, flying buttresses, the pinnacled aisles, the massive tower, its strong buttresses finished off by battlemented turrets, and its graceful octagon crowned with crocketed pinnacles, while above all rises the falcon and fetterlock, the badge of the House of York.

Enter the building and admire the three great arches that bear up the engaged sides of the tower; then turn round and mourn the truncated east end. There before you is the chancel arch, now built up, and above it a window which must at first have looked over the lower roof of the original nave. For the rest, you cannot fail to be struck by the oaken hexagonal pulpit of fifteenth century date, its fan-traceried canopy now overshadowed by a second canopy of the seventeenth century. The panelled back carries the arms of Edward IV., with his supporters, a lion and hornless hart, flanked right and left by a bull and a boar.

The large side windows were filled with figures of saints and bishops which, as a sketch in Bridges shows, were still in tolerable preservation some two centuries ago. Since then, owing to the indifference of rectors and churchwardens, they have either been broken or stolen.

On either side of the altar you will see a plain mural tablet with Corinthian columns at the angles—the only memorial now recording the names of the munificent founders. Their monuments, alas! were allowed to share the fate of the choir. The story of these tablets which date from 1573, the heyday of monumental sculpture, is a sordid one. It seems that in one of her progresses Queen Elizabeth visited Fotheringhay and was shocked to discover the scant respect with which the bodies and monuments of her royal ancestors had been treated. She

therefore issued her commands that the desecrated remains should be reinterred in the church, and that they should be commemorated by a suitable monument. Fotheringhay was, however, a long way from Court, and her agents, who had more respect for their own pockets than for the royal commands, expended the smallest sum they could upon the memorial and appropriated the surplus of the specified amount to their own uses.

The reader may like to have the names of the members of the House of York here interred—whose memory has not perished with them. They are Edward Duke of York, founder of the church and college, slain at Agincourt 1415 ; his nephew, Richard Duke of York, builder of the nave, slain at Wakefield 1460 ; Edmund, a youth of 17, son of the last, stabbed at Wakefield by the " bloody " Clifford, and, lastly, Cicely Duchess of York, who survived her husband and all her sons, spent her widowhood at Fotheringhay, and died in 1495.

The collegiate buildings lay to the south of the church, where some unevenness of the ground marks their site. They were connected with the church by a cloister, the abutments of which can still be traced against the side of the eastern bays of the south aisle. Founded in 1411 by Edward of York, the college consisted of a master, twelve chaplains or fellows, eight clerks, and thirteen choristers, whose duty it was to pray for the good estate, and (after death) for the souls of the King and Queen, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, and all the Royal Family, as well as for all faithful souls. An elaborate code of statutes regulated their conduct and daily life, and for one hundred and fifty years their duties were faithfully performed. At length, in 1548, the foundation was broken up, its property confiscated, and the college buildings destroyed or abandoned to ruin.

In the minds of most people the one name associated with Fotheringhay is that of Mary of Scotland. It was here that the last scene of her adventurous career was enacted, and the glamour of that scene has thrown the rest of Fotheringhay history into the shade. It was in September, 1586, that the

Queen was conducted hither from Chartley, and on February 18, 1587 N.S., she was executed in the castle hall. From that day forward the history of a place which had been the residence of powerful families and the seat of two ecclesiastical foundations[1] has been a blank, and there are those who will tell you that to this day the shadow of some indefinable gloom seems to them to hang over it. But the story of the last days of the ill-starred Queen needs not to be retold here; it has been told again and again, though nowhere more vividly than in the pages of Froude.[2] We may now return to the inn for lunch and then retrace our steps down the village street to the farm gate which admits us to the castle. There is no masonry remaining except a rough, shapeless block which has slipped down to the bank of the river, and which has recently been honoured with an inscription by the admirers of the Scottish Queen. But enough of the earthworks remains to show that it was originally a Norman castle, built probably by Simon de St. Liz I., of the ordinary mound and bailey type. The whole forms a parallelogram lying north-east and south-west with the mound at its upper end, and surrounded on three sides by a ditch, the river being a sufficient protection on the fourth. The main entrance seems to have been between the mound and the river, and in all probability the defences were originally of timber. In the usual course, these wooden fortifications would gradually be replaced by stone, and by 1341 at any rate a contemporary document proves that there was a tower of stone and cement, two chapels, one great hall and other buildings within the castle, but six and thirty years later, when the manor was given to Edmund of Langley, these were more or less ruinous, and he proceeded to rebuild the whole, the square keep being replaced by a new tower in the shape of a fetterlock. It was the last remnants of this

[1] Simon de St. Liz II. is said to have first settled here on the site of the later college his nunnery afterwards transferred to Delapré.

[2] Froude does not seem to have visited the place himself; he thinks that the castle is farther from the river than the village.

fourteenth century castle that were seen by Stukeley two hundred years ago.

From Simon de St. Liz the castle descended with the earldom of Huntingdon to the reigning family of Scotland, and on the death of the last earl in 1237 it came to his niece, Dervorguilla of Galloway, the wife of John of Balliol. She survived her husband more than twenty years, and spent much of her widowhood at Fotheringhay. We can thus understand how it was that a native of the place, one Walter of Fotheringhay, became the first Principal (we do not hear of a Master till 1340) of Balliol College. It is curious that another foundress of a college was lady of the castle after the Balliol reign was over—Mary Countess of Pembroke, who founded Pembroke College at Cambridge in memory of her husband, Aymer de Valence. On her death in 1377, Fotheringhay came by the King's gift to the House of York, and thus with Edward IV. to the Crown, and a royal castle it remained till James I., with his usual prodigality, granted it to a subject. But it was not a place that a subject cared to keep up. A survey of 1625 shows that it was still in tolerable repair, nor do we gather from the notes of a tourist ten years later[1] that much actual destruction had yet set in, but this champion of the Queen of Scots found only "a sickly dying Castle, not able to hold vp her heade . . . . . In her I found many Large, and goodly Roomes, Chambers, Galleries, Chappell, Kitchens, Buttryes and Cellars, all correspondent, fitt, and answerable for a Prince's Court.

"And for strength, both offensive and defensive, she was nott long since well provided w^th^ Towers, Bulwarkes, and Keeps, for Soldiers to keep in; more especially, one round mounted, large strong on the right hand of the Gatehouse,

[1] Lansdowne MSS., 213, fol. 347, quoted both in the *V.C.H.* and in *Memorials of Old Northamptonshire*, 1903. The tourist in question was a military officer stationed at Norwich, who made excursions in 1634 and 1635; the first has been printed by Mr. Wickham Legg. For his visit to Burford, see *Oxford and the Cotswolds*, p. 363. The second, which includes the visit to Fotheringhay, has not yet been printed.

purposely built by a famous Duke, for those martiall men to play their Peeces over.

"Her stately Hall I found spacious, large, answerable to the other Prince-like Roomes, but drooping desolate for that there was the Altar, where that great queen's head was sacrificed; as all the rest of those precious sweet Buildings doe sympathise, decay, fall, perish, and goe wracke; for that vnluckie and fatall blow."

But as the century proceeded destruction prepense and natural decay went on apace till Stukeley, about 1710, found the castle "mostly demolished and all the materials carried off."

Our return to Oundle is through Tansor and Cotterstock, the one on the right, and the other on the left bank of the river, where the churches are of much interest. Both have western towers without spires, but while Tansor is all nave and no chancel, Cotterstock is all chancel and no nave—such at least might be the impression produced by a hasty comparison of the two. A closer acquaintance will prove that Tansor *has* a chancel some 16 feet in length, and Cotterstock a nave of 36 feet, but dwarfed utterly by the collegiate chancel.

Tansor lies half a mile below Cotterstock and its churchyard, like that of Stratford or Burford, is skirted by the river. Entering the church, we are struck at once by the singular combination of the work of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Apparently an earlier cruciform church without aisles or tower was rebuilt in the later Norman period. Of this date are the tower and west end of the nave, where three round arches of the north arcade and two of the south remain. The other arches, three on either side, are pointed and date from the early part of the thirteenth century, when the church was lengthened by the existing short chancel, the former chancel being incorporated in the nave. At the same time, the Norman aisles were rebuilt, the north of its old width with a vestry at its eastern end, and the south aisle wider so as to include the old south transept. A pointed arch was also inserted under the Norman tower arch.

The short structural chancel is now wholly within the altar rails, and the ritual chancel has therefore encroached upon the nave. There are seven of the fifteenth century oak stalls with carved misericordes from the destroyed choir of Fotheringhay. Two more are at Benefield, and ten at Hemington near Barnwell. A Perpendicular window has been cut out of the original Early English one, perhaps in the time of John Colt, rector 1440, whose brass is in the north wall of the chancel. Before his departure the visitor will notice above the window on

Tansor.

the west face of the tower the date 1733, which seems to point to considerable repairs at that time.

Hence up stream and over the bridge at Cotterstock mill to the small village green, where a turn to the right soon brings us to the church. A glance shows us that the principal feature is the fine lofty chancel, which is, in fact, neither more nor less than a college chapel, its roof rising far above the short nave of two bays only. You might be tempted to describe it as an antechapel, or at most a mere link connecting the chancel

with the low, battlemented western tower. The main part of this tower is Early English, but a Norman doorway, belonging probably to the original church, has been inserted in its west face. In the interior, we at once become conscious of something amiss, but we will try to forget the scraped walls (the scraping took place as late as 1878) in the contemplation of the fine roof and exquisite window tracery of the chancel. Of its collegiate use there is not much to remind us: the stalls have gone, but three ascending canopied sedilia and a piscina remain, and on the same side is the beautiful brass of Robert Wyntryngham, provost of the college, who died 1420; he wears surplice, canon's tippet, and cope. The nave, which is more than a century older than the chancel, is very dark. The old stone seats remain against the aisle walls, and each aisle has its squint. The large vaulted south porch is an addition of about 1440.

The college was founded in 1338 by John Gifford, a former rector of the parish, for a provost, twelve chaplains and two clerks to say Mass daily for the good estate of the queen dowager (Isabella of France, in whose service Gifford had been), the King and the Royal Family, the founder and benefactors, and for their souls after death. Gifford, who had resigned the living in 1317, held various lucrative offices under the Crown as well as several ecclesiastical dignities. In 1349 he fell a victim to the Black Death. The large chantry house, which was the residence of the provost and chaplains, stood near the north-east end of the church, but the estates of the college diminished, and at the dissolution in 1536 the number of chaplains had been considerably reduced. The common life of the college may be pictured from the statutes: "The provost and chaplains were to be clad in black or russet colour, without red, and when in church at the divine offices they were to wear black [furred] tippets . . . . and surplices or rochets, after the manner of the vicars of the church of Lincoln. But from Easter Eve to the festival of the Exaltation of the Cross [September 14] it was permitted to lay aside the [tippets] and wear only surplices. They were to have large definite and

uniform crowns to their tonsures, suitable for canons. [They] were to live in common and not to have more than two kinds of fish or flesh. On Sundays and festivals their meals were to be neither too slender nor too excessive. . . . No chaplain should play at tables [backgammon] either out of doors or in houses or elsewhere, nor visit anywhere save for some special reason, and with the leave of the provost or warden [vice-provost]. Nevertheless he might once a year visit his friends by leave of the provost."[1] Except just at first, it seems that the provost was always parson of the parish as well.

Cotterstock.

On our right after leaving the church we pass Cotterstock Hall, an E-shaped house in the Tudor style, but built only a couple of years before the Restoration. The window in the western gable is said to be that of the room occupied by John Dryden on his visits to his cousin, Mrs. Elmes Steward, in 1698 and 1699, the two last summers of his life. This lady was the daughter of Mrs. Creed, and, to be precise, she was second cousin once removed to the poet and forty years his junior.

[1] *V.C.H.*, ii, 168.

She seems to have inherited her mother's tastes, for Malone, who got his information from her descendants, says that "The Hall of Cotterstock House was painted in fresco by her, in a very masterly style [in spite of this the fresco has not survived], and she drew several portraits of her friends in Northamptonshire. Her own portrait, painted by herself, is in the possession of her kinswoman, Mrs. Ord, of Queen Anne Street." It seems

Cotterstock Hall.

that Dryden, who sometimes stayed with his relatives at Tichmarsh,[1] had frequently been pressed by his cousin to lengthen his holiday and visit her at Cotterstock Hall. But it was not till October, 1698, that he could make up his mind to accept the invitation: "Madam," he writes in the dignified style of the period, "you have done me the honour to invite so often, that it would look like want of respect to refuse it any longer.

[1] "His excursions to the country," writes Scott, "seem to have been frequent; perhaps the more so, as Lady Elizabeth always remained in town."

How can you be so good to an old decrepid man, who can entertain you with no discours which is worthy of your good sense, and who can onely be a trouble to you in all the time he stays at Cotterstock." The visit, however, proved so agreeable to both parties, that it was renewed in the August and September of the following year. Fifteen letters of the poet to Mrs. Steward and one to her husband—a regular country squire—are printed by Malone,[1] and if the reader has not the book at hand, he may like to see a few extracts illustrating the country life of the day.

After his first visit he returned to Tichmarsh, where the lack of female society made him all the more sensible of that which he had just been enjoying: " I had no woman to visite but the parson's wife; and she, who was intended by nature as a help meet for a deaf husband, was somewhat of the loudest for my conversation; and for other things, I will say no more then that she is just your contrary and an epitome of her own country," not very complimentary to the Northamptonshire ladies of that time! His journeys between Northamptonshire and London were made by stage coach, and he continues: " My journey to London was yet more unpleasant than my abode at Tichmarsh; for the coach was crowded up with an old woman, fatter than any of my hostesses on the rode," [2] and after his second visit he writes, September 28th, 1699: " Your goodness to me will make you sollicitous of my welfare since I left Cotterstock. My journey has in general been as happy as it cou'd be, without the satisfaction and honour of your company. 'Tis true the Master of the stage-coach has not been over civill to me: for he turn'd us out of the road at the first step, and made us go to Pilton; there we took in a fair young lady of eighteen, and her brother, a young gentleman; they are related to the Treshams, but not of that name: thence we drove to Higham, where we had [took in] an old serving-woman, and a young fine mayd: we din'd at Bletso, and lay at Silso, six miles beyond Bedford." Next day " We all din'd at Hatfield together, and came to town

[1] *Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden*, 1800, vol. i., pt. ii.

[2] November 23rd, 1698.

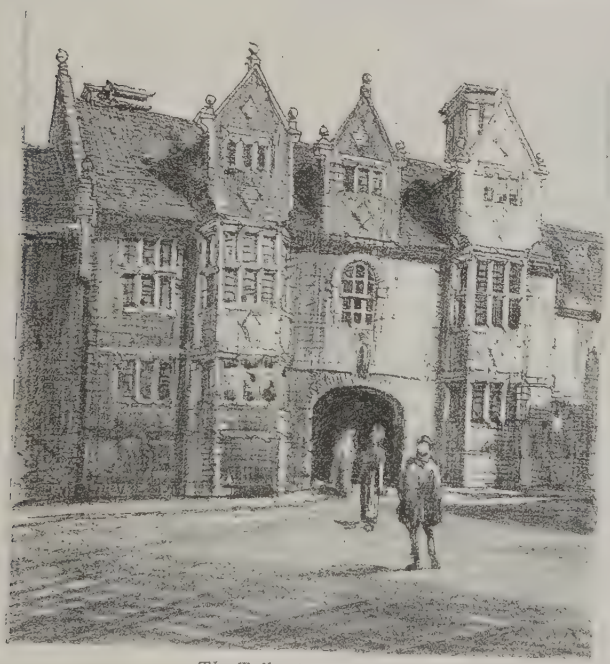
safe at seaven in the evening." Country fare was as acceptable as ever to a Londoner, and Mrs. Steward was an excellent housewife: "not to name my self or my wife, my sonn Charles is the greatest commender of your last receiv'd present: who being of late somewhat indispo'd, uses to send for some of the same sort, which we call heer marrow-puddings, for his suppers; but the tast of yours has so spoyl'd his markets heer that there is not the least comparison betwixt them. You are not of an age to be a Sybill, and yet I think you are a Prophetess: for the direction on your basket was for him."[1] Again, in anticipation of his second visit to Cotterstock, "As for the rarities you promise, if beggars might be choosers, a part of a chine of honest bacon wou'd please my appetite more than all the marrow puddings; for I like them better plain; having a very vulgar stomach."[2] Marrow puddings are said to be more popular in Germany now than in this country, but the recipe may still be found in the cookery books. A month later (March, 1699) another basket from Cotterstock arrived, though what it contained is not recorded: "The present which you made me this week, I have receiv'd; and it will be part of the treat I am to make to three of my friends about Tuesday next: my cousin Driden, of Chesterton, having been also pleas'd to add to it a turkey hen with eggs, and a good young goose." The last of these letters is dated April 11th, 1700, three weeks before his death; it contains a mention of the Fables then just printed, and, according to a tradition accepted by Bridges, written at Cotterstock. As Malone points out, however, it is not probable that more than two or three hundred verses of the whole could have been written in a couple of visits of only nine or ten weeks altogether. "The ladies of the town have infected you at a distance: they are all of your opinion, and like my last book of Poems better than anything they have formerly seen of mine. I always thought my Verses to my Cousin Driden[3] were the best

[1] December 12th, 1698 [2] February 2nd, 1699.

[3] Of Chesterton: the spirited lines beginning "How blessed is he, who leads a country life!"

of the whole; and to my comfort the Town thinks them so; and he, which pleases me most, is of the same judgment, as appears by a noble present he has sent me, which surpris'd me because I did not in the least expect it."

On the return to Oundle, the cyclist who has time at his disposal may diverge to Southwick Hall, a delightful manor-



The Talbot Inn, Oundle.

house, the oldest part of which dates from the fourteenth century, but it is getting late and I must be back at Oundle before dark, so I cannot have the pleasure of accompanying him. Moreover, if Peterborough is to be our halting place to-morrow night, we shall have to make an early start.

"Wansford in England" must be visited, if for no other reason, for the sake of the fine old bridge of ten arches which carries the Great North Road across the Nene, a bridge threatened even as I write with destruction or at least with rebuilding. Let us hope, however, that the innovations will be confined to making it wider, a process which the long bridge at Oundle has already undergone. This morning, if we steer again for Warmington and without

Wansford Bridge.

turning aside to that place enter Huntingdonshire at Elton, it is over Wansford Bridge that we shall get back into our county. Just before crossing out of Huntingdonshire we shall pass the famous old "Haycock Inn," now a private house, but a celebrated place of entertainment in the old coaching days. Its name was derived from an adventure which happened to "Drunken Barnabee" on one of his journeys northwards. Arriving at Wansford, Barnaby was about to take up his

lodging when the inscription "Lord have mercy on me," denoting a house infected by the plague,[1] frightened him away, and he lay down to rest on a haycock by the riverside. The sequel may be told in his own doggerel :

> On a Hay-cock sleeping soundly,
> Th' River rose and tooke me roundly
> Downe the current ; people cryed,
> Sleeping, downe the streame I hyed,
> *Where away*, quoth they, *from Greenland ?*
> *No ; from Wansforth-brigs in England.* [2]

Above the bridge on the left is the church with its modern chancel ; the west wall of the nave is, however, part of a Saxon church, against which the north and south walls of the tower were built in the thirteenth century. The spire is an addition of the fourteenth century. Inside the church the most interesting object is the early font, on the bowl of which is carved an arcade of thirteen round arches containing figures and scroll-work.

[1] The plague is said to have been rife at Wansford in 1636.

[2] *Barnabæ Itinerarium, or Barnabee's Journal* (1638), a medley in rhymed Latin and English doggerel by Richard Brathwaite, under the pseudonym *Corymbæus*.

CHAPTER V

CASTOR—PETERBOROUGH—STAMFORD BARON—BURGHLEY—WITTERING—BARNACK

We have now passed into the more immediate influence of the great abbey whose many outlying manors and churches are scattered broadcast over the country we have been exploring. Once across Wansford bridge and we are within the bounds of that soke or liberty over which the rule of the abbot of St. Peter's was, saving only his allegiance to the sovereign, supreme. Nor has his authority been destroyed without leaving manifest traces behind it. The soke of Peterborough is still independent of the rest of the county for administrative purposes ; it has its own council, and its magistrates " hold not only commissions of the peace, but also those of oyer and terminer and gaol delivery, and His Majesty's justices of assize have no criminal jurisdiction in the soke, though capital offences are sent to them under a special Act of Parliament."[1] The last abbot became the first bishop of Henry VIII.'s new see, carved, like that of Oxford, out of the gigantic diocese of Lincoln, and the abbey church became his cathedral.

Our way to Peterborough takes us through one of the oldest inhabited sites in the county. Northamptonshire is not rich in Roman remains ; we have, it is true, come upon a small settlement at Irchester, but at Durobrivae or Castor we have the most considerable remains of the Romano-British period in the whole county. Situated upon Ermine Street, the

[1] *V.C.H.*, ii, 424.

main road connecting the colonies of Colchester and Lincoln, the settlement covered an area of about four miles east and west by two north and south intersected by the Nene. At two points—at the "Castles" south of the river, and at the modern village of Castor—the houses were clustered together

A Ruin at Castor.

in sufficient numbers to form a small town, while the rest of the area was suburban in character with scattered dwellings. North of the river there are no traces of fortification, but the "Castles" were surrounded by a rampart and ditch. This does not imply that it was in any sense a military post.

In this part of Britain after it had once been subdued, the Roman settlements were of a purely civil character, and here there is abundant evidence that the occupation of the Romanised inhabitants was connected with the arts of peace. In the pre-Roman times there had been extensive pottery works at Castor, and under the Roman rule the industry was continued, without, however, altogether losing the influence of the old native designs. This is proved by the numerous specimens which have been unearthed here, and which may be seen in the museums at Peterborough and Northampton. The first excavations were made in the twenties of the last century by Mr. Edmund T. Artis, house steward to Earl Fitzwilliam, who issued a volume of plates illustrating his discoveries, but Professor Haverfield is of opinion that much still remains to be done: "there is no other site," he writes, "save Verulam throughout the non-military parts of Roman Britain which would better repay extensive, systematic, and scientific excavation."[1]

Castor church stands high above the road and is a conspicuous feature from the low ground to the south with its splendid, richly ornamented central Norman tower supporting a late fourteenth century parapet and spire. The two upper stages of this tower both have a series of round-headed double lights on each face, those next the angles being blind. Of the cruciform, aisleless Norman church—a type which seems to have been a usual one in these parts—this tower, the north transept, and the west wall of the nave survive. No traces of any earlier church remain, but if the statement that a nunnery was founded here in the seventh century by Kyneburga, daughter of King Peada, is worth anything, a small Saxon church may have stood on the site. However this may be, and the church still has Kyneburga for its patron saint, the base of a Saxon cross, its sides carved with scrolls and birds, remains in the churchyard to the east of the church—the oldest token of Christianity in Castor. But of the date of the Norman church there is no uncertainty; by a piece of singular good fortune an inscribed stone recording the dedica-

[1] *V.C.H.* i. 169.

tion has been preserved. Protected by a dripstone, it is built into the wall above the chancel door:

XV° KL
MAI DEDICA
TIO HVI ECLE
A D M°CXXIIII

The church was therefore consecrated April 17th, 1124.

Castor.

A hundred years later it began to take its present shape. A long chancel took the place of the short Norman chancel, and the south aisle with its porch was built. If the arcade was cut through the south wall of the Norman church after the method usually adopted at the addition of an aisle, the spandrels will be part of the original church, as the west wall certainly is. The south doorway of the nave was now moved out to form the

inner doorway of the new porch. Communication between the aisle and the transept was made by cutting an arch through the west wall of the latter, thus causing the destruction of a Norman window, a fragment of one side of which is left *in situ*. Above the arch a weathering still existing shows that the aisle was lower than at present and had a lean-to roof. Still later, but before the close of the thirteenth century, this transept was enlarged to the south and east. Its original south and east walls were taken away, and the transept now had an eastern aisle communicating with the chancel. Lastly, in the

Milton House.

fourteenth century the north aisle was built, but the north transept was left unaltered, and is therefore shorter than the south transept. In the same century the spire and parapet were added to the tower, and its ground stage was roofed with a stone vault. Before the visitor quits the church he may notice a movable screen at the west end of the north aisle, behind which he will find frescoes representing scenes from the life of St. Katherine.

Our road now takes us past the park of Milton House, since the beginning of the sixteenth century the property of the Fitzwilliam family, and since the middle of the last appropriated to a younger branch. In the park are the kennels of the Fitzwilliam hounds, whose country stretches away southwards till

it meets that of the Oakley near Higham Ferrers, while to the north it is bounded by the Cottesmore. The history of this Hunt goes back to 1769, that of the Grafton to 1750, and of the Pytchley to about 1761. To the right of the road, about a mile before we enter Peterborough, is Longthorpe tower, the fortified portion of a late thirteenth century house. Adjoining the south-west angle of the tower was a wing containing the hall, which occupied the site of the parlour of the present house. The basement and first floor of the tower are vaulted, but the top floor has a comparatively modern roof. These domestic towers, which call to mind the peel towers of Northumberland, are very rare so far south, but, as we shall see later on, there is one at Canons Ashby and another at Astwell towards the Buckinghamshire border.

Of no town in this part of England has the growth been so rapid as that of Peterborough. From a small vill appendant to a wealthy monastery, it has come to be the second town in the county with a population approaching 34,000. Even a century ago it was still an insignificant country borough barely a tenth of its present size, and known to the outside world only for its cathedral. But the last fifty years have changed all that, and it is now one of the most bustling railway centres in the kingdom. For it is the railways that have worked the wonder, and have made an out-of-the-way settlement on the very edge of the fens a hive of industry that can rank abreast of Swindon, Derby, or Crewe. But in this book, for better or worse, we are not concerned with hives of industry, and therefore, after a glance at the well-featured town hall of 1671, we draw up in face of the great gateway leading into the cathedral precincts.

Here, before the most considerable monument of Christian workmanship in the Eastern Midlands, I had almost said between the Trent and the Thames, it is meet that we should pause. The foundation itself has lasted for more than twelve centuries and a half, eight hundred and eighty-four years as a Benedictine monastery and over three hundred and seventy years as a diocesan cathedral. Its buildings have passed through many

changes of fortune. The conventual buildings have been thrice destroyed and have now for the most part been swept away, but the church, the last of three that have occupied its site, still stands, in all essentials the same as when it was founded eight hundred years ago. Its two predecessors had a shorter lease of life, the first of two hundred and fifteen, and the second of one hundred and fifty years. The foundations of the eastern portion of the latter may now be seen beneath the south transept of the present church. Nothing approaching to a detailed history of the foundation or description of the church can be attempted in a book of this kind; the ordinary visitor will probably find all he wants in Mr. Sweeting's excellent handbook,[1] and the historical or architectural student will know where else to look. A few outstanding features may, however, be indicated, and first for the church.

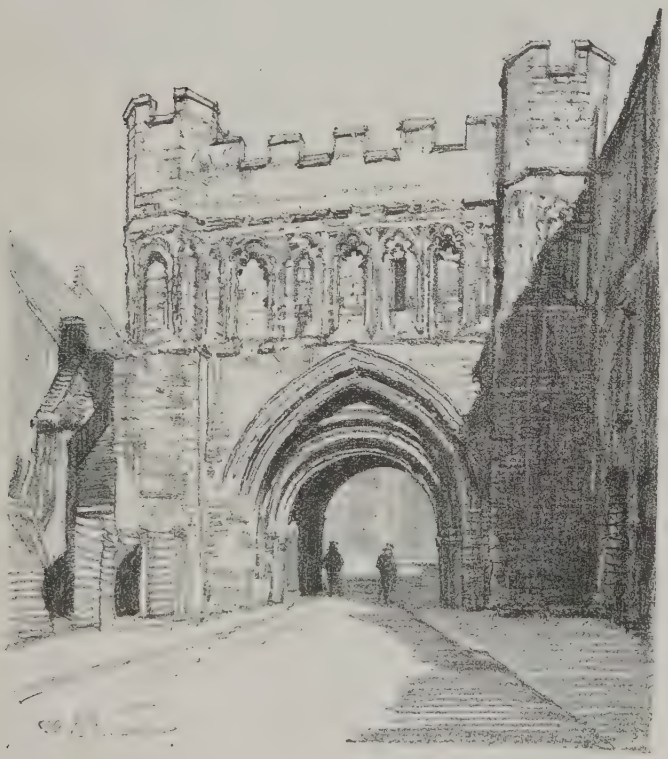
Passing through the outer gate into the precincts we are at once face to face with the great west front. The three lofty arches deeply recessed, rising nearly to the summit of the façade and surmounted by highly enriched gables, must be familiar from drawings even to those who have not seen them. There is nothing in England like the west front of Peterborough. York, Lincoln, Wells, Salisbury—they must all from this point of view be content with a second place.

The work is Early English of the end of the twelfth century, with the exception of the fourteenth century porch, which blocks the lower half of the centre arch, and was added for structural reasons. Behind the façade is the western transept, the flanking towers of which are themselves outflanked by the towers of the façade.

But when you enter the building a surprise awaits you. The Early English west front is not, as at Salisbury, the prelude to an Early English interior. You now find yourself in one of the most perfect Norman churches in the kingdom. Arcades, triforium, clerestory, all are Norman—even the circular apse of the Norman builders—a rare feature in England—is there

[1] *Bell's Cathedral Series.*

untouched. One difference only breaks the uniformity of the main structure ; the arches east and west of the crossing are not round but pointed. Round, however, they were originally, but when, in 1321, the central tower of Ely fell, the monks of



Gateway to the Precincts, Peterborough.

Peterborough took the alarm, and replaced their own lofty central tower by the lighter tower which we now see, and this involved the rebuilding of the arches in question. Not till 1884 was it found necessary to tamper with this tower, but in that year it was taken down and rebuilt exactly as before,

every stone that could be used again being replaced in its original position.

From the arcades the eye travels to the roof, one of the most remarkable features of this cathedral. It is of wood, in the choir vaulted, but in the nave it takes the form of a flat ceiling with sloping sides, the coloured, lozenge-shaped compartments of which contrast strongly with the plain, uncoloured stone below. On the other hand, the roofs of the aisles, which are beneath the triforium, are vaulted in stone.

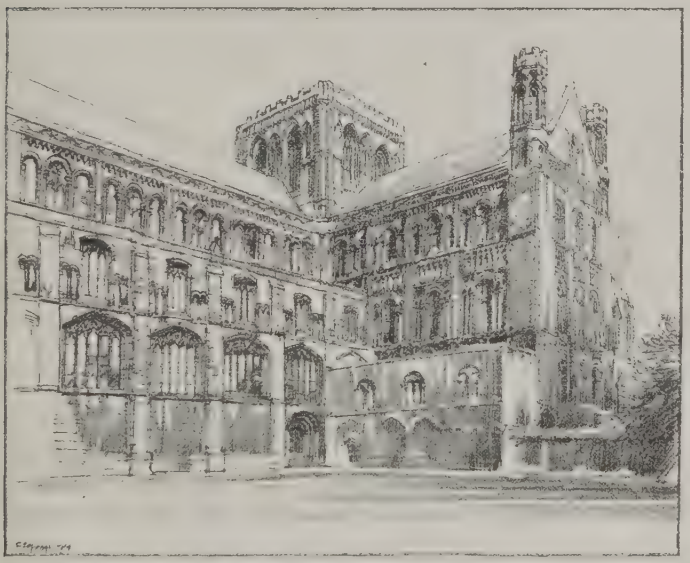
The choir screen, which has taken the place of a predecessor in eighteenth century Gothic, is unfinished, and the organ, owing to the modern craze for "vistas," has been poked away into the triforium of the choir, although the effect is not so disastrous as at Ely, where some of the most beautiful Decorated carving in existence has been masked by the intruder.

If the visitor will now leave the interior of the church for a few minutes and walk round to the east end, he will observe that the apse rises above a square-ended chapel of Perpendicular workmanship which is built round it and projects some thirty feet beyond it. This is the "New Building" erected by Abbot Robert Kirton (1496–1528). The elaborate pierced parapet, the massive buttresses terminating it, the huge seated figures, the rich panelling below the windows inside, and the beautiful fan tracery vaulting show that he spared no expense. To connect it with the church the eastern ends of the choir aisles, which were apsidal inside and square outside, were cut through, and the sills of the three lowest windows of the apse lowered to the ground.

It might have been expected that the Lady Chapel of 1272 would have occupied this position, but the monks' cemetery came too near the apse to leave room for its length (100 feet), and it was therefore built as an eastern projection from the two northernmost bays of the north transept, while at the east end of the passage left between it and the choir there was the small vaulted chapel of St. Thomas of Canterbury. After the Restoration, when the citizens were considering what should be done to

repair the havoc made of the cathedral by the Cromwellian soldiers, this Lady Chapel was pulled down for the value of the materials, and it has never been rebuilt. The Lady Chapel at Ely occupies a somewhat similar position, but it is farther away from the choir and is entered from the north-eastern corner of the north transept.

All the most idolatrous, and therefore the most beautiful, monuments were conscientiously destroyed in 1643 by the



S. Transept, Peterborough Cathedral.

Puritan soldiers. They seem, however, to have spared the famous picture of the sixteenth century sexton which looks down upon the visitor as he leaves the cathedral. As the inscription on his tombstone records, "Old Scarlett" died in 1594, "ætatis 98." The present portrait is a copy made in 1747, but can hardly be a faithful one, if a drawing of 1721, now in the British Museum, is to be trusted.

> "Second to none for strength and stordye limm
> A scarbabe mighty voice with visage grim
> Hee had inter'd two Queenes within this place"—

to wit, Queen Katharine of Aragon and Queen Mary of Scotland, the former on the north side of the presbytery and the latter on the south. James I. had removed his mother's body to Westminster in 1612, and thus her tomb escaped the violence of the soldiers, but to that of the other Popish Queen no reverence or respect was shown, and Puritan zeal had its way. Both sites are now marked by inscriptions.

There are some Saxon coffin lids in the north transept and the recumbent effigies of six abbots survive, but the most remarkable piece of ancient sculpture is the so-called Hedda stone, from a belief that it commemorated the slaughter of Abbot Hedda and his monks by the Danes in 870. It is in the shape of a small tabernacle with gables and a sloping roof, and has six figures of saints on either side, the one with a cross within the nimbus being probably intended for our Lord. If connected with Hedda the stone would probably date from the restoration of the monastery, a century after the massacre, but according to another theory it is part of a shrine erected over the relics of St. Kyneburga and her companions when they were moved from Castor to Peterborough in the first half of the eleventh century.[1]

The conventual buildings, with the exception of the Prior's house (now the Deanery), lay to the south of the church, and remnants still exist of the Abbot's house (now the Palace), the cloister, the passage to the hostry, the infirmary, and the hostry buildings. A very good idea of their position may be obtained from Mr. C. R. Peers's large coloured plan of the cathedral and its precincts in the *Victoria County History*. On the right of the entrance gatehouse was the Abbot's prison, and on the left, the chancel of the chapel of St. Thomas of Canterbury, a later building than the chapel with the same

[1] Mr. Prior (*Medieval Figure Sculpture in England*, 1912) thinks the arcadings are of Romanesque sculpture, which would indicate a date not earlier than the eleventh century.

dedication already noticed between the Lady Chapel and the presbytery. Further on, on the right, is the Abbot's gateway (now the entrance to the Palace), and on the left near the north-west angle of the church is the handsome Deanery gateway, the work of Abbot Kirton of the New Building ; his rebus, a church on a tun, is carved in a panel above the smaller archway. East of the Deanery is the Tout (*toot*) Hill, a mound raised by the first Norman Abbot, Thorold, as a citadel to overawe his refractory Saxon brethren. This adventurer reigned over the abbey from 1069 to 1098. He had previously presided over the abbey of Malmesbury, and here he had kept his monks in check by the same uncompromising methods that he employed at Peterborough. " Whenever the monks resisted him in any matter of discipline or duty, it was his custom to cry out—' Come hither my men at arms ! ' and the terrified monks were obliged to submit to a force of the lance and sword, which he quartered on them."[1] These men-at-arms he brought with him to Peterborough and posted them on the Tout Hill, no doubt in one of the wooden towers with which these mounds were usually crowned. In order to secure their support against Hereward the Wake and his Danes, who were now congregated in the Isle of Ely, he is said to have distributed among them sixty-two hides of land belonging to the abbey, and finally by his reckless extravagance to have reduced its revenues to one-third of their former value. South-east of the Tout Hill is the house called the Vineyard, from the vineyard planted on the spot by Martin of Bec, Abbot 1133–1155.

Of the five great Benedictine Houses of the Fen Country—Peterborough, Crowland, Thorney, Ramsey, and Ely—Peterborough was the eldest, and unlike the others it was, on its west side, in close touch with the mainland. It is not surprising therefore that in wealth and importance it held the first place, although, unlike Ely, it did not become the seat of a bishop till the Dissolution. According to the Saxon Chronicle, itself the creation of the monks of Peterborough, the site was chosen

[1] Craddock, *Peterborough Cathedral*, p. 30.

by Peada, King of Mercia, in conjunction with Oswin, brother of Oswald, King of Northumberland, and they called it Medehamstede, or the homestead in the meadows which here fringe the Nene. It was not till the time of Abbot Kenulf (992–1005), who built a wall round the precincts, that the name was changed to Burgh or Peterborough. "And they began the foundations and wrought thereon, and they committed the care of the work to a monk named Saxulf. He was the friend of God and all the people loved him, and he was very nobly born in the world, and rich, but he is now much richer with Christ." This was in the year 655 and Saxulf became the first abbot. So Medehamstede grew and prospered until the Danish inroads of 870, when the monastery was sacked and burnt, and the abbot and all the monks save one were put to the sword.

Of the character of the first church thus destroyed we know nothing, save that the chronicler, Hugo Candidus, in his account of the building of the third church speaks of the discovery of huge foundation stones, one of which scarce eight yoke of oxen could draw, and which he assigned to Saxulf's church. Be this as it may, the place lay waste for nearly a century, and no attempt was made to refound or rebuild the abbey till the reign of Edgar, when Æthelwold, bishop of Winchester, undertook the task in 966, and the foundations already mentioned beneath the present south transept are a part of his church. When in 1070 Hereward the Wake burnt down the conventual buildings this church escaped, and it survived till 1116, when it was destroyed by an accidental conflagration. One John de Séez was then abbot, and another chronicler relates that on a certain August day of that year there was some difficulty in getting the bakehouse fire to burn, and "John, the Abbot being present seeming in a choleric mood, cried, 'the devil kindle it'; and presently the fire flamed to the top of the house, ran through all the abbot's offices, and then to the town. The fire burning in one of the towers for nine days together a violent wind drove

the sparks upon the Abbot's house and burned that also." "The whole of the monastery was burnt,"[1] says the Saxon Chronicle, "with all the houses excepting the chapter-house and the dormitory; and the greater part of the town was burnt also."

The town at this time lay between the abbey and the river; some fifty years later Abbot Martin is said to have removed it to its present site west of the cathedral. The year after the fire Abbot John, no longer in a choleric mood, began to build the present church, and the work was continued by his successors, until by the end of the first quarter of the thirteenth century the building, as we now see it, was fairly completed. In 1237 it was consecrated by the bishop of the diocese, the famous Grostête, assisted by the Bishop of Exeter. In 1539 the abbey was surrendered to the Crown, and two years later John Chambers, the last abbot, became the first bishop of Peterborough.

Retracing our steps through the great gate of the precincts we soon reach the parish church of St. John the Baptist. Now when the town, that is the cluster of houses which sprang up under the protection of the monastery, lay upon its eastern side near the river, its parish church was there also, but it was two hundred and fifty years before it followed its worshippers further westwards. During the whole of this period, whether it was from force of habit or from a dread of my lord the Abbot, the townsfolk tramped faithfully to church in all weathers Sunday after Sunday, but at last, in the first year of the fifteenth century, they ventured upon a protest, and complaining "that in the winter season they could not, on account of the waters, attend their parish church, but with the utmost difficulty," they prayed "that the same might be pulled down, and a new church erected in the market-stede." The bishop granted his licence, and the new church, a splendid monument of that

[1] This is the account of Walter Whittlesey. The story as given by Hugo, who was an eye-witness of the fire, is somewhat different and will be found in Mr. Sweeting's *Peterborough*, p. 12.

period, arose. The materials of the old church were used in the building, but the only fragment now recognisable is the three-light west window in the ground storey of the tower. It was now too that the nave of the chapel of St. Thomas of Canterbury was taken down and the materials given by the abbey to the parishioners. The church is entered by a handsome vaulted south porch of two bays, the outer bay having archways

The Guildhall and St. John's Church, Peterborough.

opening east and west, for the convenience of the processional path round the church.[1] The interior proportions are extremely good, the nave of seven bays, the choir of three with side chapels. The windows of the aisles, which are prolonged westwards on either side of the tower, are filled with good modern tracery and glass.

Our sojourn in Peterborough may now conclude with a visit to the Museum, where the courteous custodian has a large

[1] Compare the arches under the tower, Newnham at p. 279.

collection of relics and engravings to show us. Our next resting place will be stately Stamford—those who have paced its broad thoroughfares, and marked its lordly mansions, or who have viewed from some distant height its clustered towers and spires rising from either side of the Welland, will not cavil at the epithet—but how to get there depends upon the time at our disposal. If the day is young, the fortunate possessor of a motor car, or even the painful cyclist, may steer northwards through the fen country to the ancient manor houses of Northborough with its Cromwellian associations, and Woodcroft, which witnessed the murder of Dr. Michael Hudson, that steadfast Royalist; or if he has discovered the fresh country lyrics of the Northamptonshire cobbler, he may make his way to Helpston, the poet's home. He may then cross the county boundary and get to Stamford through the Deepings.

Northborough Church.

For myself, however, I am not for this round, or even for the more direct road by Wansford; I am content to put my cycle in the train and make the journey by rail. And here I may premise that Stamford, as those who know it are aware, is situated in two counties separated by the Welland, the northern and greater portion in Lincolnshire, the southern, known as Stamford Baron, in Northamptonshire. With the former I am not concerned. Have not Mr. Rawnsley and Mr. Griggs done it ample honour in their volume of this series? So I take up my quarters on the south of the river at the "George," one of the best managed and most comfortable hostelries in the country. The sign still hangs from the ancient beam which spans the street, but the legend it displays is

no longer the simple GEORGE INN, but, as our advanced age demands,

GEORGE HOTEL
GARAGE.

The " garage " is, of course, less than a score of years old; it is more than a century since the polite " hotel " began to drive the old English " inn " into the background. Nevertheless, you have hardly passed through the door when amid all the modern improvements you are conscious of an echo from

Maiden Lane, Stamford.

the past. Stamford, it will be remembered, was a stage upon the Great North Road, and over the doors on either side of the passage you will read in large gilt letters the words LONDON and YORK, intimating that the travellers for the south assembled in the one room and those for the north in the other. How far this custom went back I do not know, but according to *The Homeland Handbook* for Stamford, " In the reign of Charles II. the roads to the north and south of Stamford were

infested with highwaymen. Owing to this fact, travellers were wont to assemble at the George Inn until a company was formed strong enough to resist the attacks of those knights of the road." The coaches formerly drove from the stable yard right through the archway, as was universally the case with the

At St. Martin's, Stamford.

larger inns throughout the country, but the thoroughfare has now been closed in and forms a comfortable entrance hall. Besides this, other alterations have been made from time to time, including the sweeping away of a cockpit capable of holding five hundred persons, and dating from 1725.[1] I have

[1] Dick Christian, a famous Cottesmore whip of the beginning of the last century, had often met the still more famous Daniel Lambert in this cockpit.

not seen a record of the last cockfight, but down to the year 1840 or thereabouts an annual bull-baiting—"bull-running" as it was termed—took place in the streets. Cockfighting and bull-baiting, and it is to be hoped badger-baiting, are now impossibilities, but, as everybody knows, they were as popular with our ancestors as the recognised amusements of cricket and football are with us, and the people of Stamford were no worse than their neighbours.

The two most noteworthy buildings in Stamford Baron are the Burghley Hospital and St. Martin's Church. The Hospital, founded by Lord Burghley at the end of the sixteenth century, stands close to the bridge on the site of an earlier hospital dedicated to St. John the Baptist and St. Thomas the Martyr, and founded in the reign of Henry II. "As was usual with such institutions [it is situated] on the confines of [the] town, for the double purpose of relieving poor strangers as they passed by with beer, meat, and lodging, and for the constant subsistence of certain of the local poor."[1] A large round-headed water arch and a Norman buttress, relics perhaps of the earlier building, may be seen from the bridge.

The Lancastrian troops in their triumphant progress from Wakefield to St. Albans in the winter of 1460–61 wrought great havoc at Stamford, for the citizens sympathised with the opposite party, and among the buildings then destroyed was probably the original church of St. Martin, with the possible exception of the tower. The church as we now see it was rebuilt before the end of the century; it is a spacious Perpendicular edifice with a very lofty nave and aisles. The north choir chapel, enlarged northwards to twice its size in 1865, is the mausoleum of the Cecils, and the monument of the great Lord Burghley beneath the eastern arch separating the chapel from the choir is the most interesting thing in the church. Over the tomb is raised an elaborate double-arched canopy supported by Corinthian columns, and there the Lord High Treasurer lies in state. He is clad in armour over which is thrown the

[1] *V.C.H.*, ii, 164.

rich velvet mantle of the Garter, and in his right hand is the long white wand of office. In marked contrast to the Elizabethan style is the vast Italian monument to John Cecil the fifth Earl of Exeter and his Countess, a highly finished specimen of the portraiture in marble so dear to the later Stuart age. This was the Earl who, though "a constant assertor of the religion and liberties of his country," declined to take the oaths to William and Mary, and hence when the King visited Stam-

Stamford Baron.

ford in 1695 "to avoid an interview which must have been disagreeable, found some pretext for going up to London, but had left directions that the illustrious guest should be received with fitting hospitality."[1] He was a man of taste and the patron of the youthful Mat. Prior, one of whose early effusions is addressed to the Countess "playing on the lute." Here is a sample:

> When to your native Heav'n you shall repair,
> And with your presence crown the blessings there;

[1] Macaulay, *History*, chap. xxi.

Your lute may wind its strings but little higher,
To tune their notes to that immortal quire.
Your art is perfect here ; your numbers do,
More than our books, make the rude atheist know,
That there's a Heav'n, by what he hears below.

The Earl " travelled twice to Rome, and the most polite parts of Europe," in fact it was from Rome that he brought the elaborate monument we are contemplating, but as his epitaph records, he passed most of his time at his country seat " eleganter, sumptuose, splendide, liberalibus studiis oblectatus."

Burghley House.

He died at Issy near Paris in 1700, when he could not have been much over fifty.

In the aisles is a fine collection of stained glass which the ninth Earl of Exeter was allowed to remove from the splendid collegiate church of Tattershall in Lincolnshire. Its restoration to its original home is the desire of all patriotic natives of that county.

A short climb from the church brings us to the main entrance to Burghley Park, consisting of two domed lodges connected by an arcade of three arches, the centre and largest being surmounted by the Cecil arms. It is a very elaborate example of the eighteenth century fashion—a fashion which obtained even in houses of the second or third rank—of splitting the

lodge keeper's dwelling into two halves, one on either side of the gateway, and thereby gratifying the owner's sense of proportion at the expense of his dependant's sense of comfort. It was built, in 1801 if my memory is correct, by the tenth Earl and first Marquess of Exeter, whose marriage with the Shropshire farmer's daughter, Sarah Hoggins, has made him the hero of a popular tale. This story has been told so often and so recently that I will spare my readers the repetition of it here. We will pass through the centre archway into the park and continue our walk until the rising ground brings into view the great house with its many chimneys and cupolas, and its golden gates flashing in the sun.

The Cecils are of Welsh extraction, and hail from Allt-yr-ynis[1] on the Mynw in the pleasant land of Ewyas. In the reign of Henry VII. a younger son of this house, David by name, went to seek his fortunes in Lincolnshire, and under royal patronage he prospered so greatly that before 1530 he was rich enough to purchase the manor of Burghley. He was not quite a stranger in Northamptonshire, for among other appointments, he (and his son after him) held that of Water-bailiff of Whittlesey Mere and Keeper of the royal swans throughout the waters and fens of Huntingdon, Cambridge, Lincoln, and Northampton. At Burghley he began the great house which his grandson, William Cecil Lord Burghley, completed in the year before the Great Armada. It is a three-storeyed building surrounding a central quadrangle, and its famous pictures and other treasures may be inspected by the stranger at the proper times. As for the gardens, like those at Castle Ashby they were remodelled by Capability Brown about 1775.

About three miles along the London road from the park gates is the turning to Wittering, where the Saxon work in the church will attract the antiquary. Northamptonshire can boast several examples of pre-Conquest architecture. Earls Barton and Brigstock we have already visited: we are now bound for

[1] On Allt-yr-ynis see Mr. A. G. Bradley's *March and Borderland of Wales*, p. 77. The Celtic form of Cecil is Sitsyllt.

Wittering and Barnack ; Brixworth, the oldest of them all, we still hold in reserve.

The village of Wittering, though not really perched at a very great elevation, has all the appearance of it, standing as it does on a bleak upland stretching as far south as King's Cliffe and separating the basin of the Welland from that of the Nene. Towards the Welland, on which side the villages of Colley Weston and Easton on the Hill are situated, the slope is somewhat abrupt ; towards Yarwell, Wansford and the Nene its descent is more gradual ; while south of King's Cliffe as it merges into the high ground of Rockingham Forest its character becomes quite genial.

At first sight there is nothing very striking about Wittering church ; it presents to you a fourteenth century west tower with a broach spire of the usual type, a short nave and low pitched chancel. But look a little closer ; disregard the later windows and the modern porch, and observe the angle-quoins of long and short work and the wide-jointed rubble courses of the walls, once covered with plaster (as witness the projection of the quoins) now unwisely scraped away. You will now have no doubt that you have before you a genuine piece of pre-Norman masonry as old as the eleventh century at least. Pass inside and contemplate the massive chancel arch—the most primitive that we have yet seen in the county. The arch is of course round, and its mouldings rise from the ground and seem to pass right through the huge axe-hewn blocks which serve as imposts, but lest any of my readers should think this too slight a notice of such a remarkable piece of work I will give them the technical description from the *V.C.H.* in full :

" The chancel arch has a torus on the soffit, between canted hollow-chamfered angles flanked by a second torus. On the west side there is also a square-edged rib framing the arch, the sections of arch and jambs being the same. [*Note.*—The continuations of the second torus in the jambs are modern, but doubtless represent the old arrangement.] The imposts are heavy roughly-shaped blocks, built in two courses and tapering downwards. On the line of the outer rib they are set out to form separate capitals for this

member, and the rib and torus are splayed outwards below the impost and at the base. There is no sort of base to the jambs except this, and they stand on large rectangular blocks left rough like the imposts."

The chapel to the north of the chancel is, like the tower, Decorated, and in the fifteenth century the Norman north aisle was widened so that its north wall is now in a line with that of the chapel. The aisle is divided from the nave by two round arches, with zigzag ornamentation. A weathering remaining above the east window outside shows that the chancel roof was originally even lower.

Wittering probably owes the preservation of this interesting Saxon church to the poverty and paucity of its population. At Barnack, at Brigstock, and at Earls Barton—all more populous places—the body of the Saxon church has disappeared.

Regaining the Great North Road, a branch to the left leads us to Barnack, and at the top of the hill before descending into the village we pass through an extensive tract of rough ground full of "hills and holes," the site of the famous Barnack Quarries. By the end of the fifteenth century they were pretty well worked out, but up to that time Barnack stone was the chief material used by the great builders on this side of England—wherever, in fact, water carriage was available. Both the Welland and the Nene were close by, and in those days when once embarked on either of these rivers, a voyage down stream would enable it to be distributed over a vast area. Hence not only Peterborough, but all the great monasteries and churches of the fen country would have a never-failing supply of the best building material within easy reach—and as for durability, there it is to speak for itself. Again, turn the head of the barge up stream and there are the splendid churches of the Nene valley which we have already visited, and those of the Welland which are yet for to see.

Barnack has a few cottages with bits of mediæval work about them, one, for instance, nearly opposite the school, and another of fourteenth century date near the station, while the cottage

next the last actually has a Saxon window, a relic no doubt of the original church, built into one of its walls. But the great centre of interest is the church, and indeed it is the church and nothing else that has brought us so far east. At the first glance

Barnack.

we take in the two outstanding features, the tower and the steep stone roof of the porch. The Saxon tower with its pilaster strips reminds us of Earls Barton, but there the tower had four stages, here it has only two ; there the edifice was crowned

by a Perpendicular battlement, here by a thirteenth century octagon and low stone spire. The two stages are divided by a triple string course, itself a remarkable feature, and the position of the windows, many of them now blocked, suggests that the upper stage was once divided internally into two or three storeys. In any case the doorway on the east face of this stage probably opened as at Earls Barton into a chamber between the outer and inner roofs of the original church. Just above the string course on each face is a slab carved with foliage and surmounted by a bird. On each of the three exposed faces of the lower stage is a window, that on the west triangular headed, set in projecting frames. On the south side is a solid round-headed doorway, the imposts consisting of rough square blocks, a smaller edition of those belonging to Wittering chancel arch. The carvings already mentioned as well as that in the spandrels of the south window of the lower stage show that the eleventh century architect had his ideas of ornamentation. There is none of this at Earls Barton, though there the pilaster strips are more elaborated, and this absence would be in favour of the theory which makes the tower of Earls Barton the older—perhaps by half a century—of the two. What the original capping of the Barnack tower was can only be a matter of conjecture, but whatever it was, it was replaced in the first quarter of the thirteenth century by the present belfry stage. This, as we have said, is an octagonal lantern, but, unlike the lanterns of Lowick and Fotheringhay, it is covered with a short, stout spire rising from within the flat-topped summits of four octagonal pinnacles. At the same time, the lower stage of the tower was vaulted and a vice inserted in its south-west corner. Of about the same date too is the south porch, its high-pitched roof of heavy stone slabs calling to mind the Treasury at Merton College. The ground floor of the tower forms a spacious chamber entered from the church by an arch of exceptional width, the imposts on the jambs of which are worth notice, for they are of stone, but carved in imitation of the superimposed Roman tiles which we shall find in similar positions at Brixworth. In the

centre of the west wall is a seat with a triangular head, and traces of other seats to the right and left of it were discovered at the restoration of 1854. From the established fact that such courts were commonly held in a church in Saxon times, it is inferred that these seats were those of the president and assistant officers of the local court of justice.

East of the tower the small Saxon church gradually gave way to the present one. The north side was built first and its arcade with its zigzag ornamentation bears the stamp of an earlier date than the south arcade. Last of all came the south or Walcot chapel, built by the Brownes of Walcot (a hamlet of the parish) towards the close of the fifteenth century. The chancel is of the Decorated period, and so is the sacristy or vestry on its north side. This vestry once had an upper storey, the floor of which has been removed, and was entered from the church through the north chapel by a doorway blocked up at the "restoration" in 1854, when the present doorway from the chancel, till then only a narrow opening, took its place. These two-storeyed sacristies were not very unusual; there is one, for example, which has also lost its upper floor at Hanborough in Oxfordshire, another, still perfect, at Warmington in Warwickshire. The two rooms would serve as a dwelling for the sacristan, and openings in the chancel wall would enable him to keep an eye upon the treasures of the high altar. In the east wall of the south chapel are two canopied niches, that to the north containing a sculpture of the Annunciation and an illegible inscription which the *V.C.H.* suggests may be "Iesus Maria in contemplacione sua." Among the vicars of Barnack who resided in the fine old vicarage house, now much altered, were Richard Fletcher (1586–1590) afterwards Bishop of London, and father of John Fletcher the dramatist, and Charles Kingsley (1824–1830), father of the author of *Westward Ho!*

And so past the north side of Burghley Park back to the "George" and a comfortable cup of tea in the "Lounge."

CHAPTER VI

GREAT CASTERTON—TICKENCOTE—EXTON—EMPINGHAM—KETTON—NORMANTON—HAMBLEDON—EDITH WESTON—LYNDON.

STRIKING across the south-west corner of Lincolnshire for Grantham, Newark, and York, the Great North Road soon enters the small shire of Rutland, the Red Land[1] to which this and the two following chapters must be devoted. In shape roughly triangular with the apex to the south towards Rockingham, its highest ground is on the Leicestershire border, where it sometimes reaches an altitude of over 600 feet. The north is chiefly an elevated plateau, while the centre and south are broken by lower ridges into a series of wooded valleys running from west to east. The Welland, its only river of any account, parts it from Northamptonshire, and the only other streams we shall have occasion to mention are the Gwash, that waters Empingham, Tickencote, and Casterton, and the Chater, that comes down from the western uplands and flows between the Luffenhams to Ketton.

If we have not forgotten that Ermine Street, the Roman road which connected the colonies of Colchester and Lincoln, corresponds for much of its course with our road, we shall not be surprised to find that the first Rutland village we come to bears the significant name of Casterton, Great or Bridge Casterton, to distinguish it from Little Casterton a mile or so lower down the

[1] "The prevailing redness of the soil which colours the streams as well is derived from the ferruginous limestone of the hills." W. H. R. Curtler in *V.C.H.* The writer, is, however, sceptical as to the derivation of the name of the county from this fact.

Gwash. As for the *castra*, some traces of it may be found near the river, but much of it has been destroyed, and it is doubtful whether it was ever anything more than a fortified enclosure into which flocks and herds could be driven on the approach of danger. The unrestored church (the pulpit retains that boon to the hearers, its sounding board) is an interesting example of Early English work; nor need the visitor feel any misgivings as to the round arches of the arcades, for in this district this form of arch survived at least as late as the middle of the thirteenth century. The Perpendicular alterations, including the disappearance of the high, pointed roof of which the corbels remain, are plain to see. In the wall of the south aisle is an arched recess containing the effigy of a priest in eucharistic vestments, and on the outside of the same wall is another recess, in which is a very curious flat stone with the head and feet only of a recumbent figure sunk in squares at its extremities. Pass round to the east end to admire the two beautifully constructed lancets, and above them a niche containing a statue of St. Paul, one of the patron saints of the church.

About a mile further a turning to the left takes us to the secluded village of Tickencote with the finely timbered park of the Wingfields and one of the most remarkable churches in the county. The name, it may be noticed in passing, signifies the *Kid's cot*, and points back to a time when the Saxon goatherd pastured his flock in the open spaces of the surrounding woods. Much of these woods had doubtless been cleared away, and the goats had already given place to sheep, when the villagers saw the beautiful little Norman church of St. Peter rising in their midst. Architectural evidence shows that this would be towards the middle of the twelfth century, when the plainer features of that style had taken on those elaborate ornamentations which characterise its later development. We have already seen a palmary example in the church at Northampton dedicated to the same patron saint. From this period down to quite modern times the history of the fabric, like that of the vast majority of country churches, is a blank, but at the close of the eighteenth

century the veil is lifted and the state of affairs then disclosed is melancholy enough. At some period, perhaps when the chapel of the Holy Trinity, to be mentioned presently, was destroyed, the Norman nave had disappeared, and been replaced by another in the Tudor style, but by this time both it and the unmutilated chancel were fast falling into decay, and it was owing to the patriotic intervention of a member of the family at the Hall that the dilapidation did not go still further. Raise your eyes

Tickencote.

as you enter the church and read "the lay grav'd on the stone" above you:

ELIZA WINGFIELD,
with that true sense of Religion and
Reverence for her Maker, which ever
distinguished her life, rebuilt this Church
in the Year 1792.
She died July 14, 1794, aged [87] years
and her remains are here deposited.

Of this restoration the first thing to be observed is that, while the chancel was in the main faithfully reconstructed in its original shape, the nave, already, if we may trust an old engraving, partly roofless, was entirely swept away, and in its place, to quote Thomas Blore, whose projected *History of Rutland* unfortunately remains but a fragment, "the architect seems to have intended an imitation of the Norman style; and if he has not been successful, he has the consolation to have many brethren of his profession, who have failed in their endeavours to revive the architectural taste of our ancestors." The two lateral projections, the tower on the south, where there was formerly a small Norman porch, and the vestry on the north, are also additions of the restorer. We pass to the chancel, and will again listen to Thomas Blore: "an intelligent mason," he writes, "employed in the rebuilding of the church, whose testimony I think myself fortunate to have received, informs me that the greatest care was taken to preserve all the parts of the chancel which were fit to be used again, and appeared to be members of the original design, and that what was supplied on that occasion was as far as possible carefully copied from the old materials." The correctness of this statement is shown by a drawing of the exterior of the east end as it was before the rebuilding, published by Harrod of Stamford in 1789. Here we see, as at present, two round-headed windows one above the other, the lower lighting the chancel and the other a room over the vaulting. This room formerly had another window at its western extremity commanding the nave, and was reached by stairs in the thickness of the wall at the north-east corner of the chancel, but these were removed at the rebuilding. To sum up our impressions of this architectural gem with its column-like buttresses, its tiers of blind arcades, and its finely moulded windows—it would be a difficult task to find a finer Norman east end of its size in the country.

The advowson of the church belonged to the Augustinian abbey of Osulveston in Leicestershire, and this (*quasi* Ourston) is supposed to account for the presence of muzzled bears among the

carvings. The Augustinians, however, were not lords of the manor. In the fourteenth century the family of Daneys, ancestors of the present owners, was in possession, and on the south side of the chancel is the wooden effigy of a knight in armour said to represent a member of this family, Rowland le Daneys, who fought in the French wars of Edward III., and represented his county in Parliament. The effigy was probably removed to its present position on the destruction of the chapel of the Holy Trinity, which was built on to the south side of the chancel, and of which the foundations were discovered a quarter of a century since. This chapel is mentioned in the will of Sir John le Daneys (1433), and it is conjectured that it was founded in the early part of the previous century as a chantry chapel by Bricius le Daneys, then the lord of the manor.. Before the rebuilding, the fourteenth century arches which connected the chapel with the chancel were to be seen built up in the wall.

But after all the wonders of the exterior, a still greater one is reserved for the stranger when he enters the building. In his case if he knows not beforehand what to expect, ignorance is bliss, and he will be positively startled when he is confronted with the chancel arch. For some moments he will be able to look at nothing else, and he shall be left in peace to gaze his fill at the wealth of ornamentation with which the five orders of the arch are loaded, for five they are without counting the hood mouldings and the rolls of the innermost member. There remains the vaulting of the chancel dividing the roof into six compartments, the ribs like the jambs of the five windows being enriched with treble zigzags, and the rectangular font with Early English ornamentations.

The visitor may now be left to form his own judgment on the merits of the renovation undertaken by the benevolent lady of 1792, but he will doubtless reflect that, but for her, the fate of the matchless east end, and even of the incomparable chancel arch, might have been very different. The sentiment of contemporaries, it appears, was not wholly one of unqualified approval; at any rate, a (possibly rival) architect who had surveyed the church

in 1780, twelve years before the rebuilding, seems to have had his doubts as to the wisdom of a too drastic interference with the building as it then stood. In a paper, entitled "Pursuits of Architectural Innovation," which he contributed to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1806, he quotes his report of six and twenty twenty years earlier as follows: "Though much of the work has been havocked still the greater part of the intention is left, and fully sufficient to enable a 'religious' restoration, allowing for a moment there was a necessity for such a job."

A long stretch of road, eminently Roman in its undeviating straightness, must now be traversed until we finally quit it for Exton Park. But first we pass over the ground (and very easily, too, for the Great North Road is excellent going) on which was fought one of the minor engagements of the Wars of York and Lancaster—the battle of Hornfield or Empingham in which the Lincolnshire rising of 1470 was crushed by King Edward. This, by the way, is the same skirmish as that which our school histories term Loosecoat Field, because the rebels are said to have thrown off their coats (their cassocks with the colours of Welles, Mr. Oman explains) in their haste to save their lives. At the head of the insurrection was Sir Robert Welles, "a greate capteyn" of the land between the Humber and the Wash, and at the first news of the troubles, his father, who had added the title of Welles to his earlier one of Willoughby, and his father's brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Dymoke, the King's champion, were summoned to London under a safe conduct, as pledges for the good behaviour of the younger man; but Sir Robert had now mustered his forces and was on his southward march. The King, with characteristic promptitude, set out from London on the 6th of March and on the 12th was at Stamford dragging with him some heavy field-pieces—no easy task over the roads of those days. The rebels formed up in battle array across the high road about two miles to the north of Tickencote, while the sheriff, John Dale of Tickencote, led his *posse comitatus* to join the royal forces. The King's first step was to send a trumpet to summon Sir Robert to surrender, his second to order the father

and uncle to execution before Queen's Cross at Stamford. His troops were already set in array, " wer never seyn in Inglond so many goodly men," and his great guns were brought into play upon the insurgents. At the head of his cavalry he charged in person, and the slaughter was tremendous ; even to this day the scene of the carnage is known as " Bloody Oaks." As for Sir Robert, he was beheaded a week later at Doncaster. There is no doubt that Warwick and Clarence were secretly implicated in this affair, but of this let the historian treat.

It is now time to quit the high road, and a woodland lane to the left soon brings us out into the wide, turfy uplands of Exton Park. Presently we reach a large lake surrounded with trees, and then enter the deer park. A gentle rise and lo ! the glades of a veritable forest, where the bucks and does are feeding, and on this October morning the intruder on his bicycle may be excused if he nourishes some misgivings as to his chances in the event of a conflict with those formidable antlers. Further on woodmen are carting away the remains of some huge oak, and after another mile we are safe in Exton village, where the clusters of well-kept cottages straggling on the outskirts of the park betoken a well-managed estate. Facing the green is a quiet-looking inn, and here I leave my cycle and make my way on foot to the south-west part of the park, where I am to find the parish church, the Elizabethan mansion, burnt out at the beginning of the last century (1810), and its successor built at various times between 1811 and 1852.

Of the old house there is not much to be said. In its prime, with its pierced parapet, gables, porch, and solid chimney-stacks, it must have been an enviable home ; but now, a roofless shell and a prey to the ivy and the elements, it is a forlorn and melancholy spectacle from which one is glad to turn to contemplate the handsome, comfortable-looking mansion in which the lords of Exton now reside. Attached to its eastern end is a family chapel, but our attention is demanded by the parish church, which ranks among the very finest in the county.

It is a Decorated building of great beauty, the steeple being

one of the finest examples of this period in the whole of the Midlands. The tower of three stages with double windows to the belfry is flanked by most elaborate buttresses; its summit is battlemented, with battlemented turrets at the angles. Then comes a hexagonal lantern with a window in each of its sides, and above all a delicate spire with two tiers of gabled lights. The upper part of the spire was damaged by lightning in 1843, and some years later the whole church underwent restoration.

The interior is so rich in monuments to the successive owners of the estate, that a brief notice of them must be first given. We need not go further back than the Greenes—a family whose acquaintance we have already made at Drayton and shall meet again at Green's Norton. To them belongs the oldest monument in the church, that on the north side of the chancel; it commemorates Nicholas Greene, who died in 1378. Then came the Colepeppers, of whom no monuments remain, then the Haringtons, and lastly the Noels, the present lords of Exton. This was a Staffordshire family, a branch of which settled in Leicestershire in the sixteenth century, and acquired the manor of Brooke, between Oakham and Uppingham. Sir Andrew Noel of Brooke, who died in 1607, was one of the shining lights of the Court of Elizabeth, but he seems to have been an incorrigible spendthrift—"of a liberal spirit," as Arthur Collins politely puts it—and to have had to part with his Leicestershire property. So notorious indeed was his extravagance that the Queen herself is credited with the following witticism:

> The word of denial and letter of fifty
> Is that gentleman's name that will never be thrifty.

On the other hand, his good qualities, "person, parentage, grace, gesture, valour, and many other excellent parts, amongst which skill in music," according to Fuller, secured him the hand of Mabel, daughter of Sir James Harington of Exton, but this lady had a brother, and it was not with this marriage that the Exton estates came to his family. This access of fortune it owes to the marriage of his son Edward with the daughter of a wealthy

London tradesman. Readers of *Oxford and the Cotswolds* will recollect Sir Baptist Hicks, mercer at the sign of the White Bear in Cheapside, and builder of the splendid but brief-lived mansion of Chipping Campden in Gloucestershire. Like so many of the successful citizens of his time, Sir Baptist invested his fortune largely in landed estates. In 1609 he purchased Campden, and shortly before the death of the impoverished Lord Harington in 1614 he purchased from him his Exton estate. It was his daughter and heiress, Juliana Hicks, who married Sir Edward Noel of Brooke, and Sir Edward on the death of his father-in-law became the second Viscount Campden. He lived till 1643, and in 1682 his grandson was created Earl of Gainsborough, a title which expired with the sixth earl in 1798. In 1841 the earldom was revived in favour of the last earl's great-nephew, and the present earl is the third of the new creation. It may be added that a review of the family names shows that those of Baptist and Juliana are not forgotten.

And now for the monuments, but the reader must first allow me a word as to the first Lord Harington, Sir Andrew Noel's brother-in-law, and the father of the vendor of Exton. In addition to Exton he owned Combe Abbey in Warwickshire, and in 1603 he and his lady (Anne, daughter of Robert Kelway, whose monument we are to see) received the charge of the Princess Elizabeth, afterwards Queen of Bohemia, then a child of eight. The Princess was sometimes at Exton, where mementoes of her are still preserved, and where an avenue bears the name of the Queen of Bohemia's Ride, but she resided chiefly at Combe Abbey, and it was thence that the Gunpowder plotters intended to carry her off. Lord Harington, however, sent her safely out of the way till the danger was past.

The interior of the church is like the exterior, mainly Decorated, but the arcades, the south with clustered and the north with circular columns, are perhaps parts of an earlier structure. The relics of the elaborate funerals of former times, helms, surcoats, and banners, are suspended from the walls between the windows of the clerestory—the helms and possibly the rest of these

trappings being a part of the funereal furniture which it was the duty of the undertaker to supply.

The monuments are all in a splendid state of preservation. West of Nicholas Greene's monument is that of Sir James Harington (died 1591), the father of John, first Lord Harington, and Lucy his wife, the figures kneeling. Opposite is a lady, Elizabeth Countess of Gainsborough (died 1771), reclining on a sarcophagus and pointing to the medallions of herself and her two husbands, the fourth Earl of Gainsborough (died 1751) and Thomas Noel, Esq.[1] (died 1788). In the south transept is the remarkable monument of Robert Kelway (died 1580), the father-in-law of the first Lord Harington. He lies in his gown at the back, while in front of him kneel his daughter and her husband. Between the parents is a miniature table tomb with the effigy, in gown and round cap, of their son Kelway, aged twenty-one weeks, and behind the mother kneels her daughter Lucy. This Lady Harington survived both her husband and her son John the second baron, and about the year 1616, says James Wright, the first historian of Rutland, being a charitable person, " built a convenient place for a small Library in the Parish Church of Okeham, and furnisht it with about two hundred Latin and Greek Folio's, consisting chiefly of Fathers, Councils, Schoolmen, and Divines, for the use of the Vicar of that Church, and accommodation of the Neighbouring Clergy ; most of which Books have been curiously bound, the Covers adorn'd with several guilded Frets (commonly call'd the Harringtons Knots) and *Ex Dono Dominae* Annae Harringtonae *Baronessae.* Printed and pasted in the Title Pages." These books are still preserved in the vestry at Oakham.

In the north transept is the elaborate monument by Grinling Gibbons of the third Viscount Campden and his fourth wife. " His eminent loyalty," we read, " to his two Sovereigns King Charles I. and II. ; his conjugal affection to four wives ; his paternal indulgence to nineteen children ; his hospitality and liberality to all that desired or deserved it (notwithstanding

[1] See page 360.

inestimable losses in his estate, frequent imprisonments of his person, spoil and havock of several of his houses, besides the burning of that noble pile of Campden[1]) have justly rendered him the admiration of his contemporaries and the imitation of posterity. He left this life for the exchange and fruition of a better, the 29th day of October in the LXXI year of his age, anno domini MDCLXXXII." Opposite to the Viscount stands his fifth son, James Noel, " ingentis Spei Juvenis, forma præcellens æque ac Statura eminens," who died in his eighteenth year. He leans elegantly against a pillar, and there are verses in his honour both in Latin and English. The latter run as follows :

Great as his birth did all his actions show,
His very recreations spoke him so
Spritely his meen, yet gravè, discreet, and wise ;
Free from the age's Grand debaucherys.
Vertue with Stature still his years out-ran :
He dy'd in's nonage, and yet liv'd a man.

At the west end of the north aisle is a mural monument by Nollekens to Lieutenant-General Bennet Noel (died 1766), and in the tower are the elaborate effigies of one of the earlier Haringtons (John died 1524),[2] and his wife Alice (died 1500), and also a very beautiful recumbent figure of Anne, a granddaughter of the first Lord Harington and wife of Thomas Bruce, Lord Kinloss, who died in childbed in 1627 at the early age of 22, " a Lady endowed with a natural disposition to Vertue, a true understanding of honour, most noble behaviour, perpetual cheerfulness, most eligant Conversation, and a more than ordinary conjugal affection."

After our survey of these interesting memorials, and I can assure the reader who has not yet seen them that the time he can spare for a visit to Exton will not be wasted, our way lies through pleasant lanes to the large village of Empingham, but in these October days darkness draws on apace, and a hurried

[1] See *Oxford and the Cotswolds*, pp. 196–197.

[2] Mr. Prior says that the figure of Sir John Harington is a replica of that of the Earl of Wiltshire (d. 1498) at Lowick.

glance at the church is all we have time for. You can see, however, that the place is prettily situated on the north bank of the Gwash, and contains some substantial houses. The church is entered at the west end through a kind of double arch, one within the other, in the lower stage of a very lofty tower supporting a short, crocketed spire. The interior is spacious, and originally of twelfth century date, to which period, or early in the next century, the arcades, the one round-arched and the other pointed, probably belong. But the main part of the structure is Decorated with Perpendicular additions. An attractive place this, but necessity knows no law, and so regretfully crossing the bridge and striking the Oakham and Stamford road we make the best of the five miles through the failing light home to the "George."

Rutland's three great parks are Burley, Normanton, and Exton. The last we have just visited, of to-day's excursion, Normanton is the goal. Let us then quit Stamford by the lower road parallel to the Welland and ride through Tinwell with its saddleback tower to Ketton. With Tinwell comes a reminder that we have not yet left the Cecils behind, for before the Reformation the place was one of the manors belonging to the monks of Peterborough, and shortly before the Dissolution David Cecil, the grandfather of Lord Burghley, was the abbey bailiff here. It seems that David was related to a Welsh knight, who had married and settled at Thornhaugh, a few miles across the river to the south, and that towards the close of the fifteenth century he had come up from his native Ewyas to seek his fortune under his kinsman's auspices. We have already seen (p. 139) what rapid progress he made.

The Chater, the second in rank of the Rutland rivers, here joins the Welland, and ere long Ketton, the proudest place it waters, comes into sight. Ketton, as everyone in the Midlands knows, is famous for its stone quarries, which have been worked for at least 400 years, and are still far from exhausted. It is a good-sized village with a very long main street, and the cottages are evidently built to last, witness one with a two-storeyed bay

and mullioned windows bearing in the gable the date 1629. The pride of Ketton, however, is its church, "a most elegant specimen of ecclesiastical architecture," as a writer of a hundred years ago phrases it. The magnificent Early English central tower with its Decorated broach and the elaborate west front are among the most striking features of the exterior, and those who have seen Exton, Ketton, Oakham and Langham will admit that little Rutland can point to churches which need not shrink from rivalry with some of the finest that its greater neighbours, Lincoln and Northampton, can show. You will not fail to note the canopied saints between the lower spire lights, the tall shafted lancets of the east and west fronts, the cornice of the nave with its ball flower ornaments, the arcaded Norman entrance, and when you have passed inside, the lofty arches of the nave and tower. Look above the chancel arch and you will see a doorway apparently opening into the tower, and again above the arch at the east end of the south aisle and you will see a stone platform with chain and zigzag mouldings for the support of a gallery by which this door was reached. The present roof of the nave is flattish, but marks on the west face of the tower show that it had high pointed roofs of two different dates as its predecessors.

There are some pleasant strolls by the Chater below the church, but we have now to climb the steep ascent to the plateau on which Normanton lies. Three miles more of open country bring us to the east gate of the park, and our road runs through it amid the herds of deer which are feeding beneath the aged oaks. On our right the sward slopes down to the delightful valley of the Gwash, and as we keep along the top an open glade suddenly discloses a glorious view to the north-west—a view such as one might come upon again and again in some far western shire, but here a rarity. The great wooded hill that closes in the distance is Burley Hill, dominating Oakham, but distant as it seems, it is barely half a dozen miles away, and it will not be long before we find it nearer to us.

Normanton, once the abode of the Mackworths, has for the last two centuries been the seat of the Heathcotes, another branch of

whom was not so long ago well known in Hampshire. The founder of the family, Sir Gilbert Heathcote, was a London merchant, who rose to be Lord Mayor in the days of Queen Anne. He died at a good old age in 1733, and was, as a monument in Normanton church informs us, "a Person of great natural Endowments improved by long experience: Ready to apprehend, slow to determine, resolute to act. . . . A great Instrument in founding and well governing the Bank of England. In the Year 1711 was Lord Mayor of London; which City he govern'd with Courage and Temper after having represented it in four successive Parliaments with Dignity and Integrity." The present representative of the family is the Earl of Ancaster, who has also succeeded to the ancient barony of Willoughby de Eresby, and with it to the princely seat of Grimsthorpe in Lincolnshire.

Normanton House is nearly two hundred years old, and stands pleasantly enough among

> the clover'd lawns
> And sunny mounts of beauteous Normanton.

Thus wrote John Dyer, rector of Coningsby, and a poet less known nowadays than he deserves. It was the second Heathcote of Normanton who recognised his talents and presented him to the rectory. It is indeed with South Wales rather than with the Midlands that Dyer is usually associated, as Mr. Arthur G. Bradley has told us in his volume on that district,[1] and "Grongar Hill" by the Towy, on whose banks Dyer was born, is probably his best known work. Nevertheless, it was at Coningsby that his last years were spent and "The Fleece," a didactic poem in four books and his most ambitious effort, written. At Coningsby, in the year of its publication, he died. Wordsworth, as might be expected, had a good word for the "Bard of the Fleece," and the poem certainly has its purple patches, whatever we may think of Johnson's sturdy dictum "The subject, Sir, cannot be made poetical," or his application

[1] *Highways and Byways in South Wales*, pp. 169–172.

of the Horatian trope to the conjunction of poetry with wool.[1]

But we must now leave "Health's cheerful haunt" (Dyer again) behind, and crossing one of the most beautiful stretches of the vale we climb the opposite hill and ride along the ridge to its western extremity, where from Hambleton churchyard a splendid view of the country may be obtained. On every side but that from which we have come the ground breaks away steeply, and it will be well to rest awhile and look leisurely about us. Burley is now nearer, and therefore an object more familiar and less mysterious than when we beheld it a short while since looming up in the tempered autumn sunlight; below us lies the fertile vale of Catmose, from the midst of which rises the splendid spire of Oakham, just far enough away to be distinct itself while the details of the town which it dominates are pleasantly subdued, and further still the eye ranges over the hills that form the western wall of the little county. All this, I say, you may survey from the churchyard; of the church itself not much need be said. Modern are the chancel, the vestry, and the south porch, but the western tower with its short spire, and most of the rest of the building Early English. It seems, however, from the apparent date of the centre pillar of either arcade that the church required strengthening in the Decorated period. The south doorway with its ornamentation of billets and pellets is Norman and was perhaps moved to its present position when the church was enlarged.

A steep lane to the south takes you past picturesque clusters of cottages down to the Gwash, and if you feel inclined for a pleasant ramble of a mile or two you will wheel your machine along the right bank of the stream, and then ascend to Edith Weston. You will not have gone far when you will see on the other side of the Gwash a house of dignified aspect. The space between the two advanced gables is filled by a loggia

[1] "The woolcomber and the poet appear to me such discordant natures, that an attempt to bring them together is to *couple the serpent with the fowl.*"—*Life of Dyer.*

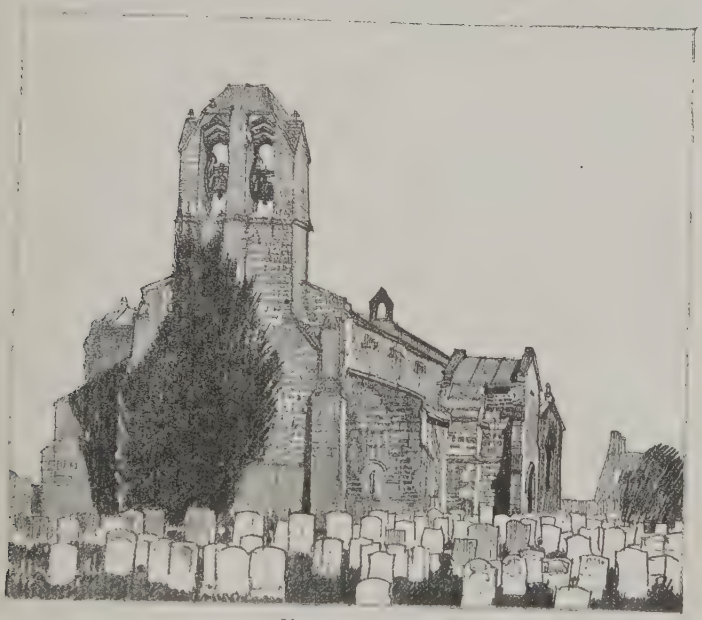
supporting a balustraded balcony, and indeed the whole of the façade bespeaks one of the lesser manor-houses of Jacobean date. This is Hambleton Old Hall, for some time the home of the Barkers, a prosperous yeoman family which rose to the height of a baronetcy under Charles II., but only for a short time. Then, though the title lapsed, its representatives survived for some generations at Lyndon, where we shall directly meet them again. This fine old house is now rented by a lady farmer—a famous rearer of poultry.

Edith Weston is perched upon the summit of the hill. Lyndon lies at the bottom on the other side. Both are charming examples of the Rutland village, with their comfortable farm-houses, and thatched cottages, the gardens bright with autumn flowers. Edith Weston gets its prænomen from a former lady of the manor, Edith, Queen of the Confessor and daughter of Godwine. After her days William de Tanquerville stepped into her place, and attached the church to a priory which he founded here in accordance with a practice dear to the hearts of the Norman conquerors. The religious houses, which they established in their newly-acquired English manors, they made cells to some foundation under their patronage in the land of their birth. Thus the father of this William de Tanquerville had founded the Benedictine abbey of St. Georges de Boscherville, and it was to this abbey therefore that his son attached his English priory. It seems to have been a very small society ; the brethren were not always resident, and when they were, were not always a blessing to the village. About 1357 we hear of an acting prior who wasted the substance of the convent in riotous living, cut down the trees, pulled down the cottages, and drove the farmers from their land with despiteful usage. We can therefore imagine the delight of the villagers when, before the end of this century, St. Georges sold its rights to the Carthusians of St. Anne's at Coventry.

The church has a most beautiful spire, and the nave arcades retain the rounded form of the arch which in this district, as we noted above, did not vanish with the Norman period of architecture. The Romanesque capitals of the chancel arch are said

to be a reproduction of some of those in the church at Boscherville. Of the conventual buildings there seem to be no remains.

A short run on the Manton road and a fieldway to the left takes us down to Lyndon, where the Hall is said to have been built in 1675 by Sir Thomas Barker. I have not seen it and it has probably undergone some changes since the early nineteenth century writer already quoted with reference to Ketton



Manton Church.

described the interior as " a good specimen of old English comfort, without any of the appendages of modern frippery."[1] The best known members of the family are Samuel Barker, a famous Hebrew and Greek scholar of his day, who married the daughter of William Whiston, the mathematician and divine, and his son, Thomas Barker (1722–1809), who married a sister

[1] *Beauties of England and Wales*, 1813.

of Gilbert White, and, like his brother-in-law, kept a naturalist's diary. He wrote an account of Lyndon for the reprint of Wright's History of the county. Whiston, who resided with his son-in-law during his later years, died at the Hall in 1752 and is buried in the churchyard. " His sufferings for conscience' sake prove his sincerity," says his epitaph.[1]

From Lyndon it is but four miles and a half to Oakham, but evening is coming on and darkness is setting in, so I make for Luffenham station, halfway between the villages of North and South Luffenham, where the train is to take me back to Stamford, and Oakham must be left for to-morrow. I pass through North Luffenham, but have no time to stop, though the church has a good broach spire and beautiful double sedilia ornamented with ball flower. Henry Noel, a younger son of the second Viscount Campden, had a house here (pulled down in 1800) which was attacked and pillaged by the Parliamentary soldiers in 1643.

[1] His sincerity is also illustrated by the following anecdote, which I quote from *The Beauties* (*Rutlandshire*, p. 126) : " In the year 1725 he was accustomed to attend Queen Caroline, along with other learned men, one evening in every week, to talk of the progress of science. The queen paying him a compliment on his candour and sincerity, requested him to tell her of her faults ; and after some time he mentioned her irreverend (*sic*) behaviour at chapel, as having made an unfavourable impression on the minds of strangers. The queen said nothing ; but about six weeks afterwards again requested him to recount her faults. ' Madam,' said he, ' I have laid it down as a maxim never to tell any person of more than one fault at a time, and never to mention a second until the first is mended.' "

CHAPTER VII

OAKHAM

It is only fair that the capital of the county should, like Northampton, have a chapter to itself, short though it must be. Let the reader therefore now imagine himself comfortably established at the "Crown" at Oakham, and he will find himself in a pleasant little country town, from which at least half a dozen good cycling routes radiate, and though at first he may feel prone to pine for stately Stamford, he will soon find himself at home, for the inn is good, and the folk affable and courteous. If he is wise he will lose no time in calling at the Library of Mr. George Phillips, the able author of the *Cambridge County Handbook for Rutland* and the editor of the *Rutland Magazine*. At the same time he may also stroll round the market place, where he will view with contentment the seemly houses that surround it, and inspect more closely the ancient Butter Cross with its high pyramidal roof surmounted by a sundial, and supported by massive oaken posts. The new buildings of the Grammar School, which are not far off, he will probably regard as useful rather than ornamental. The old school-house, now used for a museum, is a short distance away at the north-east corner of the churchyard. This school and that of Uppingham are the twin foundations of the Elizabethan archdeacon Robert Johnson; but of him and his works we shall have more to say later on. For the rest the church and the castle are the principal objectives of the visitor to Oakham town.

And first for the church. Thomas Hardy in one of his stories

writes of some Wessex church that it "had had such a tremendous practical joke played upon it by some facetious restorer or other as to be scarcely recognisable by its dearest old friends." Far be it from me to apply these words to Oakham, such application, if requisite, I would leave to those who knew the church in its unregenerate days. I only know that in 1858, a dangerous epoch, it underwent a thorough, some people say drastic,

Oakham Church.

restoration at the hands of Sir Gilbert Scott, and that Sir Gilbert sometimes swept away historic landmarks which it may be hoped that nowadays he would have been the first to spare. But we may feel sure that he was right in making short work with misplaced galleries and whatever else was both monstrous and unsightly, and though the reparation would to-day be undertaken in a more conservative spirit, there is no gainsaying the fact that the church is magnificent both outside and

in. In its general lines it has much in common with Langham, its near neighbour, but while the spire here rises from a battlemented tower that of Langham is a broach. At Langham, too, the transepts are simple and not divided into two aisles by an arcade, and the chancel is lower and aisleless. The general appearance of Oakham is that of a spacious Decorated church with Perpendicular additions. There are, however, evidences remaining of the building as it existed before its fourteenth century renovation, as, for instance, the south doorway and the font with its interlacing Norman arcades. The west front has the outer arch of its doorway continued upwards to include the great tower window, a very uncommon arrangement, but occurring again at Essendine in this county ; and above this are three niches containing figures of our Lord and two saints. Above again are double belfry windows, and at the corners of the tower octagonal turrets with pyramidal caps. A peculiarity is the floriated crucifix rising from the gable of the south porch—we shall see another example at Langham. Both here and at Langham there are three tiers of lights in the spire, but the details of the two steeples are different. Langham has, as already mentioned, a broach spire, and the belfry windows are single instead of double.

The castle is to the east of the church and consists of two courts or baileys, each surrounded by an embankment more or less perfect. The depression between the baileys was utilised as a fish-pond. There is no trace of any mound, and therefore, as Mr. Hamilton Thompson told his audience in a lecture printed in the *Rutland Magazine*,[1] when the Earl of Cornwall about the middle of the thirteenth century raised a wall upon the banks and converted what had hitherto been no more than a fortified manor-house into a castle ; it was one of the keepless type, of which we have already seen another example at Barnwell. But while at Barnwell we found only an empty shell,

[1] See also his notice of the castle in his *Military Architecture in England during the Middle Ages* (1912), pp. 197–198—a masterly piece of work.

we have at Oakham in the hall, or principal "house" of the fortified enclosure, a building of the first importance. This is situated in the south-west quarter of the first or southern court, and doubtless had other buildings such as kitchen and other offices connected with it. The present famous stone hall must have replaced the earlier Saxon one of timber, mentioned in Domesday, towards the close of the twelfth century (1190–1200), as is apparent from the lightness of the columns which divide the nave from the aisles and the character of the ornamentation of the capitals and the arches. In that case it would be the work of the Lord of Oakham of that day, namely, Walkelin de Ferrers, a descendant of Henry de Ferrers who fought at Hastings, and whose younger son Robert was the ancestor of the lords of Higham Ferrers. Walkelin died in 1201, and Oakham eventually passed to his daughter Isabella, with whom it remained till 1250, when Henry III. made it over to the Earl of Cornwall. The notorious Thomas Cromwell had a grant of it in 1536, and from his descendants it passed to the Haringtons and has since followed the fortunes of Burley-on-the-Hill.

We may now examine the hall more particularly. It is an aisled building of four bays with a lofty, pointed roof, the arcades consisting of circular columns supporting rounded arches, but the stiff-leaved foliage of the capitals together with the dog tooth on the hoodmolds show that Early English style of ornamentation was already well advanced. This arrangement of nave and aisles, Mr. Hamilton Thompson suggests, was derived from the plan of the infirmary halls of monasteries, of which we saw an example at Peterborough, where the aisles were the dormitories of the patients. Here the floor of the nave was slightly raised above that of the aisles, which would be used by the servants going to and fro from the kitchen. The kitchen, buttery, and pantries would be, as usual, at the end of the hall behind the screens (here the east end), and the daïs at the other. The doorways which led to the offices are still visible, and the main entrance to the hall would be in the south wall not far from them, for the doorway now in use has been

enlarged from one of the windows. It is probable that the building owes its excellent preservation to the fact that it has been for generations used as a court room, and it is here that the county assizes are held.

Those who have never heard anything else of Oakham have heard of the horseshoes, of which a large number (now 177, but gradually increasing) are affixed to the walls of the hall. The ancient custom is that whenever any royal personage or peer passes through the town, he or she must give a horseshoe to the lord of the manor. In case of refusal, the bailiff had the right to take one from the rider's horse. The toll has long been commuted for a payment of money to be expended on the manufacture of a shoe of the pattern specified by the contributor. Fanciful explanations of the origin of the custom have long been current, but probably it was simply a manorial due which custom exacted from every nobleman riding through the town. A curious story is told of a shoe taken from the hoof of the twenty-first Lord Willoughby de Eresby's favourite horse "Clinker," which found its way to the hall in 1840. Six years later a couple of boys from the Grammar School got into the hall through a window and carried off Clinker's shoe in triumph. Nothing more was heard of it for a dozen years, when it came back by post, with a request that its receipt might be acknowledged in *The Standard*. The acknowledgment was duly made and "Clinker" restored to its place.

On the south-east of the town and visible from the railway is the Hospital of St. John with its Perpendicular chapel, founded towards the end of the fourteenth century. The visitor may not have time for this, but if he has an hour or two to spare, he should certainly visit the beautifully kept gardens of Catmose, which are courteously thrown open to strangers at certain times, and indeed by this time he will probably be glad to spend a leisurely day, and give his cycle a well-earned rest.

CHAPTER VIII

BURLEY-ON-THE-HILL—LANGHAM—UPPINGHAM—STOKE DRY—LIDDINGTON—CALDECOTT—WAKERLEY.

> Hail, happy Fabrick, whose auspicious View
> First sees the Sun, and bids him last Adieu !
> * * * * *
> Triumphant Structure ! while you thus aspire,
> From the dead Ruins of a *Rebel* Fire ;
> Methinks I see the Genius of the Place
> Advance his Head, and with a smiling Face,
> Say, *Kings have on this Spot made their Abodes ;*
> *'Tis fitted now to entertain the Gods !*
>
> *Burley-on-the-Hill, a Poem.*

So sang James Wright of the Middle Temple, Esquire, a better antiquary than poet, whose *History and Antiquities* of the county we have already quoted. The Triumphant Structure is of course the magnificent Palladian mansion built (1694–1702) by Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham, and seventh Earl of Winchilsea, Secretary of State to William and Mary and afterwards to Anne, whose name is so familiar to readers of Macaulay. The house, which is more than 500 feet above the sea, a considerable elevation for these parts, is a conspicuous object from the south-west, and in Macaulay's own words "from one of the noblest terraces[1] in the island looks down on magnificent woods of beech and oak, on the rich valley of

[1] There were originally five of these terraces, but all but the uppermost one were swept away in the time of the ninth Earl of Winchilsea (the last to own Burley) by Humphrey Repton (1752-1818), a disciple of Capability Brown.

Catmos, and on the spire of Oakham." The earl is said to have spent £80,000 on its construction, about £240,000 of our money, but this he was the better able to do, since a few years previously he had sold Kensington House for 18,000 guineas to the King. He seems to have been apprehensive lest if he had left the work to his son a still larger outlay would have been incurred. " I would not," he wrote, " have my eldest son under y^e^ temptation of living in Town for Want of an House, nor of being too extravagant in building one." [1]

The estate he had bought from George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham, but the house, in which " Kings had made their Abodes "—in plain prose visited the first Villiers there—was then a ruin, for in order to prevent its falling into the hands of the Royalists it had been burnt out by the Roundheads, who found themselves unable to defend it. The Kings were of course James I., in whose honour Ben Jonson's *Masque of the Metamorphosed Gipsies* was performed here in 1621, and Charles I., on the occasion of whose visit the famous dwarf, Jeffrey Hudson, passed into the service of the Queen. As for the Gipsies, they were neither more nor less than the " house party," to use the modern phrase, Buckingham himself included, and the metamorphosis took place when, at the close of the performance, they discarded their disguise and appeared in their " rich Habits " for the dance with which these entertainments regularly terminated. This was James's second visit to Burley ; the first was in the spring of 1603, when on his way to take possession of the English Throne he stopped to dine with Sir John Harington, who then owned the estate. After dinner he continued his journey to Stamford, and as he rode over Empingham Heath a number of bagged hares were turned loose, and his Majesty had the satisfaction of watching Sir John's hounds " with good mouthes following the game." This diversion was succeeded by the astonishing spectacle of no less than a hundred giants advancing towards him. The King, had, however, no cause for alarm, for this formidable apparition proved to be

[1] Miss Pearl Finch, *History of Burley-on-the-Hill.*

nothing worse than a troop of "poore honest sutors all going upon high stilts, preferring a petition against the Lady Hatton." This was the widow of Sir Christopher's nephew, Sir William Newport Hatton, who was to become a famous Court beauty, and who took as her second husband Lord Chief Justice Coke.

This was on Easter Eve, and the King spent Easter Day with Thomas Cecil, the second baron (afterwards Earl of Exeter), at Burghley House. On the Monday, for some reason or other —perhaps to see some more sport—he rode back to Burley-on-the-Hill, but was thrown from his horse, and hurt his arm. So the following day, the pain being too great for him to ride, he was taken back to Burghley in a coach. But Sir John Harington had now secured a place in the Royal favour, and it was to his care that the Princess Elizabeth was soon to be entrusted. In the same year he was raised to the peerage, and his son became the trusted friend and comrade of Henry Prince of Wales, and, like him, met an early death.

Burley-on-the-Hill was purchased from the Harington executors by George Villiers I., Jeffrey Hudson's first master. Jeffrey had been presented to the Duchess by his father, an Oakham butcher, when nine years of age and scarcely nine inches high. The story of the pie is well known. The dwarf had not been long in the service when the visit of Charles and his Queen to Burley took place. At dinner a huge pie was set upon the table, and the crust being broken out stepped master Jeffrey, much to the delight of the Royal guests.

George Villiers II., the spendthrift "Zimri" Duke (though he did not die "in the worst inn's worst room" as Pope has it), must have jumped at the chance of converting his broad acres into cash, when, as we have seen, a purchaser came forward in the wealthy lawyer, Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham, whose descendants are still in possession. Those who have read Finch's character in Macaulay's seventh chapter[1] will be prepared for the elaborate set of rules which he drew up

[1] *History of England.*

for the conduct of his household at Burley; they will be found in Miss Pearl Finch's *History*. In the same chapter Macaulay has also sketched the character of his father, the first earl, but his readers may not be aware that after Earl Daniel's final retirement from public life he entered the arena of theological controversy; at any rate, in 1721 he received a deputation

Langham Church.

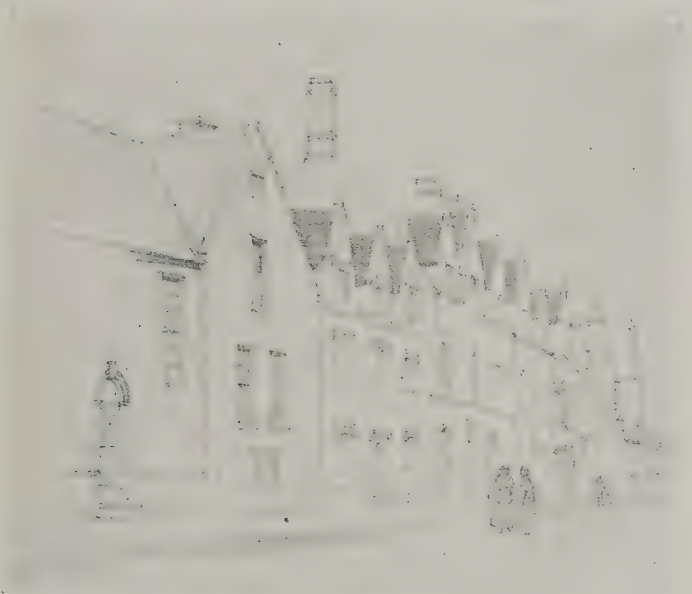
from the University of Oxford, consisting of the Vice-Chancellor and Burgesses, who conveyed the "solemn thanks of the University" to his Lordship for his "most noble defence of the Christian Faith" contained in his "answer to Mr. Whiston's letter to him." Whiston, it will be remembered, was, perhaps at this very time, the earl's neighbour at Lyndon.

Now Burley lies to the north-east of Oakham, but this morning

we are taking the Melton Mowbray road to the north-west, and at Langham we have left the Finch territory behind and again entered that of the Noels. On the way we pass Lord Lonsdale's hunting establishment at Barleythorpe, and it is to be hoped that all those who love to devour the road before them will respect the earl's appeal to "drive slowly past the stables." We have already said something of Langham church in connection with that of Oakham. It is indeed a triumph of mediæval art, and as far as the exterior goes it is perhaps only the comparative insignificance of the eastern limb that would rank it as the less splendid building of the two. The low pitch of the chancel roof, however, gives room for two Decorated windows above the chancel arch ranging with those of the clerestory. It must also be admitted that the symmetry of the design has suffered by the destruction of the north transept in the eighteenth century. The crucifix already mentioned rises from the gable of the surviving transept, but the figure of Christ has been broken off. The interior is spacious and stately; the arcades are about a century older than those at Oakham, and the pier capitals are therefore without the rich carved work which is such a distinctive feature of that church. In the east wall of the transept is a fine bit of Early English work, a recess flanked by a niche on either side, and doubtless marking the site of an altar, and hard by, now set up on end, a slab with the incised figures of John Dickenson (died 1535) and his wife. Devonshire visitors will be attracted by the east window in memory of a Hamlyn of Clovelly who died in 1904. The road, which here branches westwards from the main highway, soon rises through open fields to the lofty Leicestershire village of Cold Overton, where the seventeenth century Hall, now carefully repaired and enlarged, and the small Early English and Decorated church deserve a visit; the latter has two low side windows instead of the usual one. After a survey of the extensive view to the north and north-east you may ride along the lanes to Knossington, a place familiar to the followers of the Quorn, and after crossing the county boundary back into Rutland make a halt on the summit of

Flitteris Park,[1] the highest ground in the county, whence seen afar the spire of Uppingham stands out against the southern sky; then facing eastwards you will descend swiftly to Oakham.

Now Uppingham cannot readily be reached by railway from Oakham, a difficulty which must not be supposed to arise from any want of friendly feeling between the two chief towns of this peaceful county. It is due rather to the irony of Fate which



High Street, Uppingham.

has assigned the one to the Midland Company and the other to the London and North Western; indeed it is very doubtful if Uppingham would be able to boast of a railway at all, if it were not for its famous school, but in fact it has a little line of its very own taking neither goods nor passengers anywhere else, and

[1] Enclosed by Richard Earl of Cornwall in 1250, but now ordinary pasture land.

starting from the North Western junction of Seaton, where the great viaduct of 82 arches, 70 feet in height, carries the rival line across the valley of the Welland. Hence passengers from

The Market Place, Uppingham.

one town to the other have to make the best of a bad business, and leaving the railway at Manton trust themselves and their fortunes to the box seat or the interior of an old-fashioned

omnibus, which will in due time land them at their destination. The cyclist will probably prefer to perform the whole journey, some six miles including a stiff climb or two, by road.

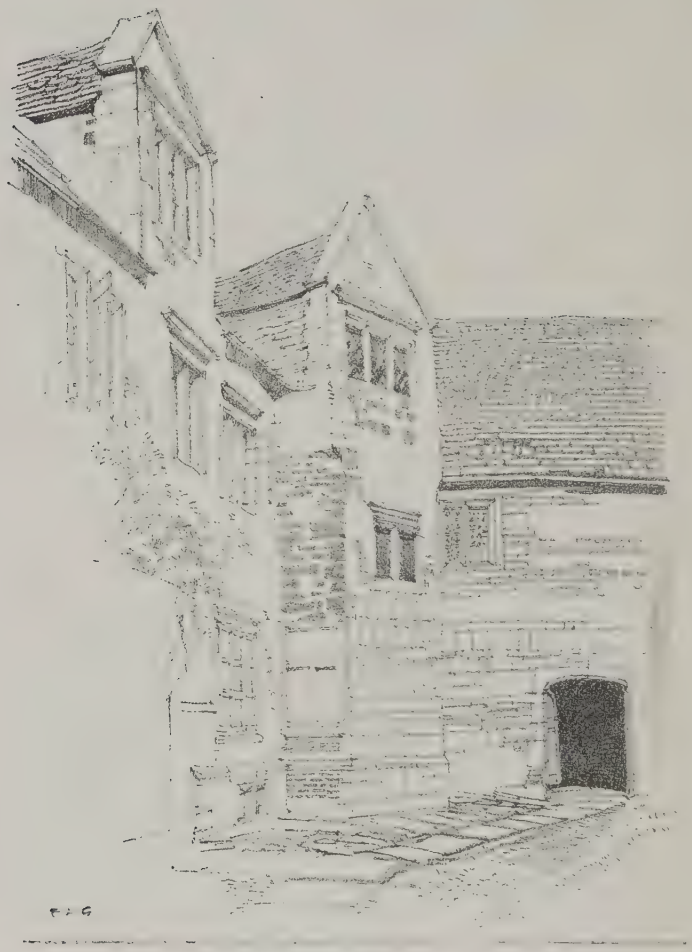
Uppingham to-day is not a place with any great attraction for the ordinary visitor, and to the outside world is known only for its school. It consists chiefly of one long street running east and west with a market place on its south side in which the countryfolk used to form an enclosure with their carts and enjoy the barbarous sport of bull-baiting. South again is the church of which little but the steeple and the nave arcades is ancient. It retains, however, a fine Jacobean pulpit known as "Jeremy Taylor's," from the probability that it was used by that divine, who was rector 1637–1642. When the war broke out he followed the fortunes of the King as his chaplain. In the churchyard is, or was, an inscription, which shows that the seventeenth century was the period when the good people of Uppingham were agitated by the question of enclosures:

Here
lies John Beaver
That honest Man
Which stood up for
the Common of Uppingham
Died November
the 11, 1682.

But whether "the Common" refers to the common fields or to the cow pasture is not apparent.

The town lies on the base line of a triangle, of which the sides are formed by the Welland and the Eye Brook, with the apex at Caldecott, where these two streams unite. Between the town and the Leicestershire border is all that remains of Beaumont Chace, a part of the ancient forest of Leighfield, which covered the greater part of this side of the county.[1] Less than a hundred years ago the Chace still abounded in deer,

[1] By the seventeenth century the forest of Leighfield, a tract of about a dozen miles by six, was all that was left of the forest of Rutland, which at one time had covered the whole of the south of the county.



An Uppingham Courtyard.

and, like the Forest of Dean at the same date, was a tempting hunting ground for unlicensed sportsmen. Anent this weakness

of the Uppingham folk I may quote a paper contributed to the *Rutland Magazine* in 1911 by Miss Alice Bell:

"Beaumont Chase sixty years ago was all woodland, joining up Wardley and Stoke Woods, and deer roamed these woods. In a little thatched cottage in Uppingham High Street, which was pulled down to make room for the new school buildings, lived a family of three brothers and one sister, Andrews by name, notorious poachers, who made this deer forest and much contained therein their own. They were makers of buckskin breeches and leather gloves, and experts at their trade. Great big men, they were yet so lithe and fleet of foot they could run down a deer or a hare, and in their heavy boots they would step with such a spring and so lightly up the street, that no one knew they were behind until they came up alongside and gave a greeting. They performed marvellous walking feats both as to time and distance, to deliver their goods to their customers. Somewhere in the woods they had a hidden pit deep enough to hang a deer, and where their poachings were left until they could be disposed of with safety. They are remembered as fine-looking men, and quite by way of being dandies, when not in their working clothes. Their coats of fine, coloured cloth were always well made; one—a plum coloured cloth with handsome silver buttons—was especially worthy of admiration. Very few were allowed inside their cottage, and no one ever went up stairs."

Our next country ramble will be southwards to the apex of the triangle already indicated, where we must visit the villages of Stoke Dry and Liddington, but no one who has written of Uppingham, even in a Highways and Byways volume, can leave it without a word as to the foundation which its great headmaster converted in the short period of ten years from a local grammar school into one of the great public schools of the kingdom. Thring reigned at Uppingham from 1853 to 1887 and his work is impressed upon the place in characters that all may read. Chapel, schoolrooms, library, laboratory, classrooms, gymnasium, boarding-houses—all bear the impress of his genius. His master stroke was the transplantation of the school to the coast of Cardigan Bay in the spring of 1876, when an outbreak of fever threatened it with extinction. As the school song has it:

A school as old as an old oak tree,
Fast by the roots was flung up in the air,
Up in the air without thought or care,
And pitched on its feet by the sea, the sea,
Pitched on its feet by the sea.

A twelvemonth later it was flung up into the air once more, and pitched down securely in its old habitations, now recovered

The Old School-house, Uppingham.

from the ravages of the enemy—to the great satisfaction of the citizens.

Together with its sister school at Oakham, Uppingham School

was founded in 1584 by Robert Johnson, archdeacon of Leicester and rector of North Luffenham, and both schools were governed by the statutes drawn up by the founder until these were superseded by the new scheme of the Endowed Schools Commissioners in 1874. Under the old *régime* there was no difference whatever in the status or conduct of the two schools, and indeed in the middle of the eighteenth century Oakham was the more

The Old Schoolroom, Uppingham.

flourishing institution of the two. Dr. Doncaster, who resigned in 1846, is said to have been Oakham's greatest headmaster, but the tree blossomed forth again under Vere Hodge (1879-1902) and the number of boys is now about eighty. At Uppingham the numbers reached one hundred for the first time under Dr. Holden, afterwards of Durham, Thring's immediate predecessor, but they had declined before his departure, soon to

rise under the new chief to three hundred, against any increase beyond which number Thring steadfastly set his face. Nowadays the muster-roll has passed the fourth century.

And now for our excursion. A couple of miles from Uppingham the Kettering road reaches the edge of the high land and begins its descent into the valley of the Welland. Here we may pause for a moment and with extensive view survey the scene before us. Immediately south on the crest of the ridge is our cynosure—Rockingham Castle, of which we shall have more to say later. To the left the tall chimney of the Corby ironworks sends forth a dense volume of smoke, and further left still are the village and church of Gretton, the Seaton viaduct, and the dark spire of Harringworth. The Welland itself is hardly visible, but on a bright winter morning, when it is in high flood the vale below us becomes a veritable lake. At present, however, it is towards the Eye and not the Welland that we direct our course, and a lane to the right soon brings us to the pretty village of Stoke Dry, once the home of the Digbys, two of whom at least —Sir Everard the Gunpowder conspirator, and his son Sir Kenelm—are names well known to history. The house which stood to the east of the church has disappeared, but some of the enclosure walls remain and now serve as garden walls for the vicarage. The church with its Digby monuments is interesting. Originally a small Norman building consisting of nave and short square chancel, it was enlarged in the thirteenth century and almost rebuilt in the fourteenth. Parts of the Norman piers of the chancel arch covered with grotesque sculptures remain ; on the cushion capital on the north side is a winged figure holding a book, and on that on the south side a man ringing a bell. This, with the adjacent masonry, is all the Norman work now visible ; the nave arcades, the south with circular and the north with clustered shafts, belong to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. To the latter century also belong the chapel to the south of the chancel and the tower with the exception of the seventeenth century belfry stage. Later still are the north and south porches, the latter with a

room over it lighted by an admirably designed oriel. The Tudor rood-screen, though its tracery is much damaged, retains its " hang over " or coving with a projecting bracket on either side.

The chapel, as originally built for a chantry, was open to the south aisle, but the arch of communication is now blocked, and it is conjectured that this was done by the Kenelm Digby of Elizabeth's time in order to fit it up as a private family chapel. It is now entered from the chancel, and is in excellent preservation, but a century ago it " seemed " to a visitor of that day " turned into a coal-cellar, and had also a quantity of brick-bats and mortar lying in it. In short, the whole appearance of the church was highly discreditable." Neither Sir Everard (executed 1606), who resided at another house of his at Gayhurst in Buckinghamshire, nor Sir Kenelm, the courtier and scholar (died 1665), is buried here, but there are monuments to earlier members of the family. The estate came into their possession at least as early as the middle of the fifteenth century, and the most ancient of their monuments is now only represented by a fragment lying in the sill of the chapel window ; it commemorated Richard Digby and Agnes his wife, and at the beginning of the eighteenth century was still in a state of tolerable preservation. In the south aisle is an incised alabaster slab with the figure of Jaqueta (died 1496), widow of Everard Digby who was slain at Towton, and in the chapel the headless effigy of Sir Everard Digby, who, as the now vanished inscription preserved by Wright informs us, died 1540. But the finest monument of them all is the large table tomb on the south side of the altar with the alabaster effigies of Kenelm Digby (died 1590) and Anne his wife, daughter of Sir Anthony Cope of Hanwell near Banbury.[1] On the sides of the tomb are their two sons and seven daughters, also two infants in swaddling bands. This, it need hardly be said, is the accepted method of representing children who died in infancy.

If you have time you may now stroll down to the brook and take a walk up the well-wooded valley of the Eye to Stockerston

[1] *Oxford and the Cotswolds*, p. 91.

Hall, but sooner or later we must regain the highway, and crossing it at our former post of observation descend to Liddington, where the church and the Bede-house are among the

Liddington Bede-house.

chief objects of interest in the county. Now, as everybody knows, the great episcopal see of Lincoln originally extended from the Humber to the Thames, and from the Avon to the Ouse, and except that the diocese of Ely was carved out of it

at the beginning of the twelfth century it remained unaltered down to the Dissolution of the monasteries, indeed even as late as the second quarter of the last century it still included Buckinghamshire. Under these circumstances it is evident that a single residence at one end of his huge territories would hardly suffice for a prelate who was to discharge his episcopal functions with any thoroughness, and therefore besides his palace at Lincoln he had substantial houses in other parts of his diocese. Among these were Buckden in Huntingdonshire, Thame in Oxfordshire, and Liddington in Rutland, the long, straggling, and "decayed" village at which we have now arrived. For Liddington to-day certainly wears a rather forlorn appearance; it is situated in a hollow on a road that leads to nowhere in particular, the clergyman lives at Caldecott, a chapelry some three miles distant, some of the cottages are decidedly the worse for wear, and there appear to be very few, if any, houses of the better sort.

Nevertheless, in the bishop's palace, for the last three hundred years the bede-house, it possesses a relic of former days of which it may well be proud. There it stands, a long, venerable building with a lofty roof on the north side of the churchyard. If you stand in the churchyard, you see a line of handsome mullioned and transomed windows, one of them a bay, but at the same time you reluctantly note that two of the chimneys are so thickly mantled with ivy as to endanger their own safety and that of the adjacent walls and roof. The north side is rather less attractive, but it has a fine gabled projection containing the stairway, and west of this is a cloister with a lean-to roof, probably added when the palace was turned into a hospital or bede-house. This was done by the second Lord Burghley in 1602, who endowed his foundation with lands at King's Cliffe[1]—a place we are soon to visit—and established in it a warden, twelve poor men, and two women as attendants and nurses. The accommodation is, however, somewhat circumscribed, and the building is now tenanted by two old women

[1] These lands now produce an income of £116 a year.

only, while the beneficiaries of Jesus Hospital, as it was named by the founder, receive their pensions at their own homes. The upper floor contains the hall with the bishop's solar at its western extremity; the rooms at the eastern end were guest-rooms. Beneath the hall on the ground floor were the kitchen, buttery and other offices, but these were divided up into rooms for the brethren when the conversion into a hospital took place.

The manor of Liddington had long belonged to the see, and the bishops no doubt had a house here long before the present house, which was begun and the greater part finished by John Russell, bishop 1480–1495, was built. Bishop Russell was a man of mark, and stood high in the confidence of his Sovereigns; under Edward V. and Richard III. he was Lord Chancellor, and while archdeacon of Berks he was thrice sent on missions to the Duke of Burgundy by Edward IV., the first time as member of a commission empowered to conclude the marriage between the King's sister Margaret and the Duke, the second time to invest the Duke with the Order of the Garter, on which occasion he delivered an Oration afterwards printed by Caxton, and one of the earliest productions of his press.[1] He was also the first Chancellor of the University of Oxford appointed for life. John Longland (bishop 1520–1547), from the presence of his favourite mottoes (*Dominus exaltacio mea* and *Delectare in Domino*) in the hall windows, is conjectured to have carried on the work, and his successor was persuaded (by *force majeure*?) to make over the manor to the Crown. It eventually came to the second Lord Burghley, who, as we have seen, converted into the hospital as much of the bishop's residence as he allowed to remain standing.

One of the aged inmates will conduct us up the substantial stone stairway to the hall, which remains in its original state, and is lighted by the windows which we saw from the church-

[1] *Propositio Clarissimi Oratoris Magistri Johannis Russell decretorum doctoris ac adtunc Ambassiatoris Christianissimi Regis Edwardi.* Only two copies are known, one in the John Rylands Library at Manchester and the other in that of the Earl of Leicester at Holkham.

yard, the westernmost lighting the solar. The most remarkable feature is the beautiful ceiling of panelled oak, the partitions which divide the whole into squares being finely molded, and the exquisite cornice composed of miniature fan-vaultings. This ceiling was perhaps inserted by Bishop Longland. The books say that the hall contains a folio Bible "given by John Clare, Esq.,

Liddington Bede-house Garden Tower.

steward to the Earls of Exeter," and a common Prayer-book with a MS. prayer for the hospital and the Cecil family. Perhaps these are now in the solar, which is not shown by our conductor.

The large walled garden of the bishops is still cultivated after a fashion, but it is far from being the neat and well-cared-for pleasance it must have been in its palmy days. A raised walk runs along the inside of the walls at half their

height, and at the south-west corner is an octagon outlook tower commanding a good view of the village and neighbourhood. High up on the outer face are Bishop Russell's arms, and, the tower projecting outwards as it does from the angle of the walls, has the ground storey pierced by the footpath leading to the church. Thus while the garden was mainly designed for purposes of rest and refreshment, it was also capable of defence in troubled times.

The visitor, who enters the church through the tower and is confronted by the tall piers of the arcades and the large transomed windows of the aisles, is apt to imagine that he has lighted upon a remarkably fine example of the late Perpendicular period, and as far as the evidence before him goes he is right. But let him pass through the rood screen and he will find himself in a Decorated chancel without a clerestory and with windows of flowing tracery. A curious sight in the upper part of the walls are the open mouths of certain large earthenware vessels which have been built into the fabric, possibly to make the service more audible. On the south side is a low side window divided by a transom. So far every prospect pleases; but in the chancel, fortunately not in the rest of the church, the walls have been scraped and pointed with dark mortar—a most objectionable practice, and, what is more, a distinct innovation of these latter days which would have horrified the mediæval architect. Before quitting the chancel he must note that this is one of the few churches in which the altar is surrounded on all sides by Laudian railings, so that the communicants could kneel all round it. It has, however, seemed good to the powers that be to disguise this interesting survival as much as possible by setting the table back against the eastern rail, and so giving it the ordinary appearance. It has been suggested with great probability that the practice of placing the communion table a few feet from the east end in the centre of a square of rails was a kind of compromise between the traditional "altarwise" position and the new-fangled Puritan notion of placing it "tablewise" in the body of the church.

There are two or three brasses left, one to Edward Watson, a lawyer, surveyor-general to three bishops of Lincoln, Smith, Atwater and Longland, and an ancestor of the Watsons of Rockingham.[1] As we leave the church we notice that the two lower stages of the tower open into the nave by a lofty arch, and from the churchyard we may take another look at the tower with its very low spire. It is of the same period as the chancel, but the west doorway is evidently a Perpendicular insertion.

When the visitor has satisfied himself with all that Liddington can show him, he has a choice of three walks across the fields. He may either return thus to Uppingham or steer his course eastwards to Seaton or southwards to Caldecott. Caldecott, as we have already seen, is, and has been from a very early period, a chapelry to Liddington. The church was almost entirely rebuilt in the fourteenth century, and at the end of the eighteenth the spire was struck by lightning and reconstructed of Weldon stone. I am indebted to a paper by Mr. George Phillips, of Oakham, for the information that a Roman camp existed here, and that when the chancel was rebuilt in 1865[2] several Roman tiles were found. Mr. Phillips thinks that the church stands on the site of the *sacellum* (a small roofless chapel), and that when roofed over it served as the chancel of the original church; he points to a small window now on the south side as being one then inserted in the sacellum wall, and suggests that a stone with a rudely executed sculpture of two human figures within a border found over the chancel arch was part of the altar of the sacellum. Whether this is so or not specialists have now no opportunity of deciding, for fifty years ago the

[1] His second son, Edward, got Rockingham on a lease in 1554. The brass, besides the figures of Watson and his wife and children, has a Latin epitaph of six elegiac couplets, and round it was an inscription in English (preserved by Wright) recording the date of his death (1530).

[2] Was it then that the altar rail was placed east of the sedilia, thus leaving them cold and meaningless? By another move in this game of post the font now stands at the east end of the south aisle, where a piscina indicates the site of an altar.

local curiosity which it aroused was so slight that the stone was actually plastered over again! The villagers, in fact, seem to have inherited the eminently practical genius of the vicar of 1780, who carried off a number of the gravestones from the churchyard and used them to pave the kitchen of his house at the neighbouring village of Gretton.

From Caldecott or Seaton, King's Cliffe, where the next chapter is to find us, may easily be reached by rail. You are now once more in Northamptonshire, and it will be worth while to halt at Wakerley, and see the interesting church which stands high on the right bank of the Welland. You were best call at the rectory for the key on your way up and then follow the field path. The wide nave is aisleless, but north and south are transeptal chapels with lean-to roofs. These are entered through Perpendicular arches and are late fourteenth or fifteenth century additions. In the south chapel the Norman corbel table (once exterior) remains above the arch, and high up in the south wall of the nave are the remains of a Norman window. The old Norman string course in the south wall of the south chapel must have been built in when the chapel was erected. But the grand feature of the church is the late Norman pointed chancel arch with a double band of chevrons. There are two columns on each side with richly carved capitals below square abaci; the capital of the innermost pillar on the north side has two knights in chain armour riding out of a castle—a very unusual subject for such a position. A short distance to the south-east and visible from the railway is the modern house which occupies the site of Fineshade Priory. This Priory was built early in John's reign, after the demolition of a castle which stood hard by, by Richard Engayne of Blatherwick for a fraternity of Austin canons. At the Dissolution it passed into private hands, and the buildings were converted into a country house, the predecessor of the present one. Opposite, on the left bank of the river, is the isolated early Norman church of Tixover, nearly half a mile from the village.

CHAPTER IX

KING'S CLIFFE—APETHORPE—BLATHERWICK—BULWICK—DEENE —ROCKINGHAM.

As late as the early part of the fourteenth century Rockingham Forest, which we have already invaded on our ride to Brigstock, stretched from Northampton to Stamford and from the Welland to the Nene. From this time onward its area gradually diminished till at the close of the eighteenth century what was left of it consisted of three detached territories, called bailiwicks, from two to four miles apart. These were the bailiwicks of Rockingham, Brigstock, and [King's] Cliffe, each being divided into smaller areas, called lawns or walks. My readers will look elsewhere for the history of the Royal Forests and the Forest Laws, with such salient landmarks in their story as the Charter of the Forests (1217), the institution of the two Forest Justices, north and south of Trent, and their subordinate officers (1238), the Disafforestation Act of 1301, which marks both the climax of the Forest system and the commencement of its decline, the Woods Inclosure Act of 1482, the senseless attempt of Charles I. to revive the obsolete rights of the Crown by extending the royal forests to their ancient limits, and the Limitation Act of 1640, which made all such attempts impossible in future, and rang the knell of the old system.[1] For our purpose we may pass over all this and come to the Forest Commission of 1786, which

[1] I take the facts from Dr. J. Nisbet's article in the *V.C.H.*, but those interested in the general subject should consult Mr. G. J. Turner's *Select Pleas of the Forest* (Selden Society) and Dr. J. C. Cox's *Royal Forests of England*.

issued its *Report* on Rockingham Forest in 1792. By this time almost the whole of the forest had passed from the Crown into the hands of the great landowners, subject to certain royal rights over the timber. The Commissioners, however, did not consider that it was to the public interest that these rights should be preserved and they reported that :—

"A forest in a situation so distant from any residence of the royal family, with an establishment of offices, either granted in perpetuity or esteemed of little value by those who possess them, and in which so little of the right to timber has been reserved, can neither contribute much to the amusement of the king, the dignity or profit of the crown, or the advantage of the public.

"And though the ancient forest laws, and the courts, when regularly held, have been found by experience to conduce very much to the increase and preservation of timber in forests thinly inhabited, . . . yet in Rockingham Forest, where the crown has little property left, where a considerable part of the land is already in tillage or pasture, and the country pretty fully inhabited, it cannot be desirable that those laws should be continued."

Rockingham Forest accordingly ceased to be a forest in the technical sense, and the Crown rights were purchased by the several landowners. But under the new system the woods were regarded chiefly from the point of view of the game preserver, and it was hardly to be expected that the timber profits, apart from the sale of coppice-wood, should be very great. With the revival of wood-craft as a national industry they may recover something of their economical importance.

That at King's Cliffe we are well within the forest boundaries is evident enough from some of the neighbouring place-names, if for no other reason. Such names as Westhay, Morehay and Sulehay recall the old *hays* or enclosures into which the deer were driven for the purpose of easier capture ; they differed, in fact, but little from a park, which was also a part of a forest fenced off from the rest, as, for example, Flitteris Park in Rutland Forest, mentioned in the last chapter. Such, too, was Windsor Park in Berkshire, enclosed out of Windsor Forest.[1]

[1] The king had a *park* at King's Cliffe at least as early as the reign of Henry III., which is heard of as late as the seventeenth century.

As for parks belonging to private individuals, which may or may not have originated in connection with a royal forest, and which the word now usually connotes, they had been confined to great nobles and bishops in mediæval times and did not become general till the time of the later Tudors.

From our comfortable rooms at the "Cross Keys" we look across the street to the fine cruciform church of King's Cliffe and

A Lane at King's Cliffe.

are at once struck by the curiously stunted appearance of the spire, but of the church, as the genealogists say, "we treat presently." Meantime, we will climb the opposite hill and get a bird's-eye view of the village with its long lines of houses stretching for some distance along the valley and the graceful curve of the railway on its northern slopes. The valley is watered by

a small stream, the Willow Brook, out of which fish-ponds have been formed, and higher up at Blatherwick and Deene actual lakes; after a devious journey it finally unites with the Nene below Fotheringhay. I have called King's Cliffe a village, but in point of fact it is a "decayed" market-town, which at one time boasted a three days' fair as well as its market. The latter has long vanished, but people still living can remember the fair, though it was only a single day's festival, and will tell you that on that occasion, and on that only, any man who chose to set a

King's Cliffe.

green bough before his door became a licensed publican for the day. Good wine, the proverb says, needs no bush, from which the inference is that bad wine does, and so the people of King's Cliffe seem to have thought, for they took care to appoint ale tasters on the day before the fair to test the quality of the liquor. Particulars as to their visitations have not been preserved, but the fact is well ascertained that other commodities besides beer were bought and sold at this annual merrymaking. These included linen and cheese, and above all the products of

the turner's lathe, for which the place was famous quite down to recent times. The dexterity acquired in this trade was so great that it is said that on one occasion a single worker for a wager turned out 417 egg-cups in eight hours. But here as elsewhere the dumping of cheap stuff "made in Germany" has proved the ruin of the industry.

King's Cliffe, as is suggested by the name, was intimately associated in former times with the Royal Family. When the monarch came down to hunt in his forest of Rockingham he had, of course, his hunting lodges in which to reside. The chief of these was Rockingham Castle, and another was in this village, where an ancient farmhouse just to the east of the church marks the site of the "King's House." In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the manor was several times granted to the Queens Consort as a dower (James I. was the first monarch to grant it to anyone outside the royal house), and this connection with royalty did not cease till the Crown rights were finally purchased by the Cecils in 1812.

In the course of a stroll round the town the stranger will note two inscribed tablets which may interest him. The first is over the old almshouses on the way to the railway station, and speaks for itself:

Aedificavit charitas
Inhabitabit Paupertas
Ornabit honestas
Durabit omnis aetas
Ex Dono Johanis
Thorp arm̄ año
1688

Of John Thorp I have nothing more to tell; the name of the author of the second inscription is a well-known one. It is over the door of a house on the north side of the road leading to Apethorpe:

Books of Piety are here lent to any
Persons of this or y^e^ Neighbouring Towns.

The books in question were placed here in 1752 by the Rev.

William Law, a non-juror and best known as the author of *A Serious Call* (1728). King's Cliffe was his native place, and here he spent the last twenty years of his life. He died at a good old age in 1761 in the house (a hermitage, her nephew calls it) of Hester Gibbon, whose "spiritual guide and faithful companion" he had long been. Hester Gibbon was an aunt of the historian of the *Decline and Fall*, and in 1789, when he wrote his autobiography, she was still living here at the age of eighty-five, and her name is doubtless to be found in the parish registers.

The church, like Iffley and Cassington in Oxfordshire, originally consisted of a tower standing between nave and sanctuary but, unlike Iffley and Cassington, by the addition of transepts it has become cruciform. Moreover, the eastern and western limbs have been rebuilt and later still aisles and clerestory added, so that nothing now remains of the original Norman church except the tower as far up as the belfry stage. The belfry stage with the broach spire was built in the thirteenth century; the belfry windows have projecting gables and their upper halves ascend into the spire. The stunted appearance of the spire, already noticed, is due to clumsy repairs. Of the transepts, the north is some two hundred years the earlier of the two. In the interior, the fifteenth century roof of the nave is good, and there are about thirty old bench-ends, brought here from Fotheringhay.

Fotheringhay we did well to approach from the south on our way to Peterborough, but should you desire to visit it from another direction, a five mile ride through Apethorpe and Woodnewton will take you there from our present quarters at the "Cross Keys." The road is not a particularly attractive one, but by way of compensation you get a fine distant view of Oundle spire to the south. Or, instead of taking the turn to the left after crossing the Willow Brook, you may neglect Fotheringhay and keep on for a couple of miles to Southwick, with its ancient Hall (p. 115). Of Woodnewton and its market gardeners there is not much to be said, though the ecclesiologist

will find something to interest him in the long, cruciform church, now docked of its north transept, but Apethorpe must not be "rushed" by the most impatient traveller.

You will hardly have entered Apethorpe before you are conscious of the landlord who has money to spend, and knows how to spend it. The "King's Head" inn on your right, rebuilt in the good old style, and the many solid and comfortable cottages with their mullioned windows and roofs of Colley Weston slate are sufficient evidence of a determination to preserve the best architectural traditions of the countryside. It may be said at once that the author of these and of all the other modern improvements in Apethorpe is Major Leonard Brassey, who purchased the estate from the Earl of Westmorland in 1904. A sharp turn to the right at the bottom of the village street brings us to the gates of the Hall. On our left is the church and on our right the fine old house built as a residence for the estate agent by the sixth earl (d. 1736), and still used for the same purpose.

Apethorpe Hall, for three hundred years the home of the Fanes, is one of the most interesting as well as the most beautiful houses in Northamptonshire. It stands in the valley of the Willow Brook amid wide stretches of forest, park, and meadow, over which the visitor with time at his disposal may wander for days. The house itself has received some judicious improvements at the hands of its new owner, but the lines of one who knew and loved it well[1] have not for that ceased to express for all time the feelings it inspires:

> The moss-grey mansion of my father stands
> Parked in an English pasturage as fair
> As any that the grass-green isle can show.
> Above it rise deep-wooded lawns; below
> A brook runs riot through the pleasant lands,
> And blabs its secrets to the merry air.
> The village peeps from out deep poplars where
> A grey bridge spans the stream; and all beyond
> In sloping vales and sweet acclivities
> The many-dimpled, laughing landscape lies.

[1] Julian Fane (1827–1870), a younger son of the eleventh earl.

> Four-square and double-courted and grey-stoned
> Two quaint quadrangles of deep-latticed walls
> Grass-grown, and moaned about by troops of doves,
> The ancient house !
>
> Written 1860 and printed in *Julian Fane, a Memoir*, by Robert Lytton, 1871.

The two quadrangles lie east and west, and the principal entrance is now in the east front, the dignity of which has been enhanced by the forecourt surrounded by terraces faced with low retaining walls, and with iron gates in the centre of three of its sides. This takes the place of an earlier "gravel garden" long swallowed up by the park which had encroached right up to the front door. The original entrance is that through the gate-house in the north front. This is a tower with two storeys over the entrance passage, which, with the building on its west side and the range dividing the two quadrangles, is the oldest part of the house, and may be the work of Sir Guy Wolston, who became its possessor in 1491. His daughter married the son of Richard Empson of Easton Neston, Henry VII.'s notorious extortioner, but on the latter's disgrace and execution in 1510 the fortunes of the family seem to have declined and both Apethorpe and Easton Neston were sold. Richard Fermor, the purchaser of Easton Neston, we shall come to later on. The purchasers of Apethorpe, Henry Keble of London, merchant of the staple, and William Blount, Lord Mountjoy, his son-in-law, probably went on with the work, and the north and west sides of the western quadrangle may be attributed to them. The outer face of the gate-house is in the good plain style of Henry VIII.'s time; the shields and Renaissance ornamentations were added by the second Earl of Westmorland; the inner face has a fine oriel window. The central range running north and south contains the hall, which is of the usual type. At the north end are the screens flanking the passage with music gallery above. A porch at either end opens into the passage, which on its north side has doors communicating with the kitchen and other offices. At the south end of the hall is (or

rather was, for it has been removed to level the floor for dancing) the daïs with its great bay window looking into the eastern quadrangle. Further south again and accessible by a door from the daïs is, as usual, the cellar with the "great chamber" over it. On the west side of the hall, owing to subsequent alterations, the windows no longer look into the open court. This west court followed hard upon the east court, and with the exception of the south side, which is part of the eighteenth century innovations of the seventh earl, was probably completed about thirty years after it.

Such, in part at least, was Apethorpe when it was granted by Edward VI. to Sir Walter Mildmay, an eminent financier and politician of his day, and the pious founder of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Under Elizabeth he filled the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and was also one of the judges who sat upon the trial of the Queen of Scotland at Fotheringhay. How much more had been built by this time, or how the eastern quadrangle was completed, is not known, but in any case the gate-house must have opened into some kind of enclosure or other, whether it was as large as the present court or not. Sir Walter is responsible for certain alterations and embellishments (he inserted his shields of arms in the spandrels of the entrance gateway) and is believed to have done something towards building the south side of this quadrangle, but he died in 1589, and his son, Sir Anthony, whose elaborate monument we shall presently see in the church, seems to have been satisfied with the house as he found it. It was his successor and son-in-law, Sir Francis Fane, the first Earl of Westmorland of the new creation (1624),[1] who completed the south and built the whole of the east sides, substantially as we see them to-day.[2] The first floor of the east front is devoted to the Long Gallery, an apartment which no self-respecting mansion of the day could

[1] Sir Francis, through his mother, could trace his descent from the Nevilles of Raby, the previous holders of the earldom.

[2] Above the coat-of-arms in the centre of the east side of the quadrangle is the date 1623.

dispense with, and beneath it were two open arcades separated by a central wall, the one entered from the gravel garden and the other from the quadrangle. These have now been converted into an entrance hall, the exterior arches, except that containing the doorway, having been closed up, and the interior ones glazed.

The south front contains a handsome suite of living rooms, the coved ceiling of one of which bears the arms of James I., who stopped to dine with Sir Anthony on the next stage of his journey[1] from Burghley, and had every reason to be satisfied with his entertainment. The contemporary account of the King's journey says: "Dinner being most sumptuously furnished, the tables were newly [laid] with costly banquets [dessert], wherin every thing that was most delitious for taste, proved more delicate by the arte that made it seem beauteous to the eye: the Lady of the house being one of the most excellent Confectioners in England, though I confesse many honourable women very expert." Nor was Sir Anthony's hospitality bounded by the feast, for after dinner he "presented his Highnesse with a gallant Barbary horse, and a very rich saddle, with furniture suitable thereunto." Sir Anthony evidently kept a good stable and his comfortable mansion was an excellent hunting seat for the Forest; no wonder, therefore, that a monarch so devoted to the chase as James was visited Apethorpe again in 1605, 1612, and 1614. It was on the last occasion that George Villiers, then a youth of two and twenty, was first brought to his notice and at once made a favourable impression. Villiers was the younger son of a Leicestershire family, and had his way to make in the world. His career is a matter of history, but the reader will remember that he has already appeared in these pages as the purchaser of Burley-on-the-Hill.

Since the time of the first earl, the principal alterations have been those of the seventh earl, who reigned from 1736 to 1762. He adopted the Palladian fashion, identified in this country with the name of the third Earl of Burlington, and, besides the south side of the western quadrangle already men-

[1] Pp. 169–170.

tioned, he remodelled the south side of the eastern, and built the block connecting the gateway tower with the Long Gallery, but, fortunately, his experiments were carried no further. In his old age (he had been a famous warrior and had served in Marlborough's campaigns) he was elected Chancellor of the University of Oxford, where he was installed "with a magnificence and splendor unknown at any former installation," and an unlucky mistake made by him at one of Queen Charlotte's first drawing-rooms gave Horace Walpole a chance of a gibe at the Tory traditions of the University. "Lord Westmoreland," he wrote to Sir Horace Mann, "not very young or clear-sighted, mistook Lady Sarah Lennox for the Queen, kneeled to her and would have kissed her hand if she had not prevented him. People think that a Chancellor of Oxford was naturally attracted by the blood of Stuart." Lady Sarah was, of course, a daughter of the Duke of Richmond, and what rendered the old earl's mistake peculiarly unfortunate was the fact that before his marriage the young King had had a decided partiality for her.

Among the other Earls of Westmorland we may mention Mildmay, the second earl, who took up arms for Charles I. on the outbreak of the Civil War, but soon made his submission to the Parliament, took the Covenant, and having compounded in £2,000, was allowed to return to Apethorpe, where he seems to have lived a quiet country life among his flowers and books. In 1648 he printed a volume of verse for private circulation called *Otia Sacra*. Though reprinted in 1879 by Dr. Grosart, it is unlikely that it has found many modern readers, but the curious few who may have glanced at the volume must have been reminded sometimes of George Herbert and sometimes of Robert Herrick. It was in fact the latter poet who encouraged the earl to venture into print:

> "You are a Lord, an Earle, nay more, a Man,
> Who writes sweet Numbers well as any can."

and, moreover, looked to him to keep his own memory green:

> " When my date's done, and my gray age must die ;
> Nurse up, great Lord, this my posterity :
> Weak though it be ; long may it grow, and stand,
> Shor'd up by you, *Brave Earle of Westmerland.*"

As it turned out, however, the earl died first.

The tenth earl succeeded to the title at fifteen, and when barely twenty-three made the famous Gretna Green marriage with the daughter of Robert Child, the banker. Their daughter, Lady Sarah Fane, carried the banker's fortune and Osterley Park to the Jersey family. Apethorpe was always one of the great Northamptonshire strongholds of the Tory Party, and the tenth earl filled the office of Lord Privy Seal for no fewer than thirty years, with the exception of the short interval when the Ministry of All the Talents was in power. The eleventh earl fought in the Peninsular War and was afterwards Victoria's Ambassador both at Berlin and Vienna. His grandson is the present (1914) earl.

We may now retrace our steps to the church. The tower which carries a short spire rising from an embattled parapet bears the date 1633 and " is interesting as being a seventeenth century version of a mediæval type common in the neighbourhood " (*V.C.H.*). The rest of the church, except the south chapel, is a late fifteenth century building. The south chapel was erected in 1621 by Sir Francis Fane in memory of Sir Anthony and Dame Mildmay, whose daughter had brought him this great estate. The chapel, however, in itself is but the outer show ; pass within and you see its true significance. There in the very centre stands a stupendous pile of black marble and alabaster, the most amazing funereal monument that we have yet seen in this county. On a massive table tomb are the recumbent effigies of Sir Anthony Mildmay and Grace his wife, and above them a domed canopy with alabaster curtains partly drawn. The canopy is supported at either end by huge rectangular piers, and at the four corners stand lifesize figures of Piety, Charity, Wisdom, and Justice, while the whole is crowned by a cupola on which is seated Charity flanked below by

Faith and Hope. Whatever may be thought of the general effect, the details are cleverly managed, and the execution of the human figures is excellent, those of Sir Anthony and his lady being no doubt portraits. The knight died in 1617, and a panel on the north side of the tomb gives us to know that "He was to Prince and Country faithful and serviceable in peace and warre, to friends constant, to enemies reconcilable, bountifull and loved hospitality." Another panel on the south side recounts that the lady "was one of the heyres of Sir Henry Sherington Knt. of Laycock in the county of Wiltes, who lyved 50 yeares maried to him and 3 yeares a widow after him, compassionate in heart and charitably helpfull with Phisick, Cloathes, Nourishment or Counsels to any in misery." This is a charming tribute to "one of the most excellent Confectioners in England," and no wonder that her memory was long fragrant in the countryside, where the old folk would tell you that she still walked the panelled rooms at the Hall with silent midnight footfall scattering silver pennies behind her. Yet once more, pass to the east side of the tomb and read how "this worthy payre having lived here worthely dyed comfortably," and how "to incite to the example of their vertues Sir Francis Fane and Mary his wife erected this monument."

There is a more genuine ring about these inscriptions than about many of their sort, and it is with a kindly feeling towards the hospitable knight (albeit that in the Queen's time his want of *bonhomie* had made him a *persona ingrata* to Henry of Navarre) and his benevolent lady that we turn to contemplate the contemporary glass which colours the rays of the morning sun as they penetrate into the chapel. The subjects are the Fall of Man, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and the Last Judgment, and in the east window of the chancel is an eighteenth century representation of the Last Supper, preserving the name of its forgotten artist,—"I Rowell, Wycomb Bucks fecit 1732."

It is a delightful ride from King's Cliffe up the valley to Blatherwick (why will people spell it Blatherwycke nowadays?), Bulwick, and Dene or Deene. At Blatherwick the brook has

been expanded into a large lake crossed where the stream first widens by a fine old stone bridge, which has apparently been built at different dates, for two tablets one above the other on the southern cutwater bear the Stafford Knot, the lower tablet being dated 1656 and the upper 1726.

The presence of the Stafford Knot is due to a branch of that house which resided here for some two centuries and a half, and indeed may be said to reside here still, for the daughter of the last Stafford married the ancestor of the present owner of the estate, Mr. Stafford O'Brien. The Staffords at one time seem to have been a turbulent race ; Sir Humphrey the first of Blatherwick was slain in Jack Cade's rebellion, 1450, and his son, another Humphrey, was executed for his share in Lord Lovel's insurrection against Henry VII. In the church is a tablet to the memory of Thomas Randolph, the poet, who died here in 1635 when on a visit to his friend William Stafford. Randolph on the mother's side was a Northamptonshire man, and was born at Newnham near Daventry in the house of his maternal grandfather.[1] It will be remembered that a greater poet than Randolph was born at his maternal grandfather's at Aldwincle.

After lingering awhile on the bridge we continue our journey to Bulwick, where we join the Stamford and Kettering road. The church here has a fine spire, but we must push on to Deene, only noting that Bulwick Hall has since early in the seventeenth century been the seat of the Tryon family, now represented by Mrs. Conant of Lyndon.

A turn to the right soon takes us into Deene, where the "Seahorse"[2]—a comfortable hostelry with a small garden in front—invites us to rest and refreshment. The lines of the Brudenells have indeed fallen in pleasant places—a well wooded, well watered vale, for here, as at Blatherwick, the waters have been collected into a lake, in the very heart of the forest country, and a spacious, well-ordered house, that can look back through

[1] P. 279, *post.*

[2] The Seahorse (Hippocampus), *heraldice* a Wyvern, was one of the Brudenell supporters.

four centuries, less princely it may be than Apethorpe, but not less captivating.

You will find thousands to whom the name of Lord Cardigan, the hero of the famous Balaclava charge, is a household word, where you will hardly find one who has heard of Deene Park, his country home, and till her death in 1915 the home of his countess. After all his adventures it was at Deene that so trivial an accident as a fall from his horse in 1868 proved fatal. He left no son, and the earldom of Cardigan has been merged in the marquessate of Ailesbury. The house, like Apethorpe and Drayton, is of the quadrangular type which prevailed before the E-shaped plan came into fashion, but in the absence of an introduction you will not discover the fact, and must be content with the glance at the north front which is to be obtained from the road, and of the south, which may be had from the pleasant path leading across the park to the picturesque hamlet of Deenethorpe.

The last earl was the seventh of his line, and represented the tenth generation of the Brudenells of Deene. We have here another of the many Northamptonshire families which owe their rise to the law. Sir Robert Brudenell rose to be one of the Judges of the King's Bench under Henry VII., and Chief Justice of the Common Pleas under Henry VIII. By 1518 he was wealthy enough to purchase the manor of Deene, and it is probable that some portions of the house he then found existing are incorporated in the present one. He died in 1531 and is buried in the church. But the first of the Brudenells to undertake serious building operations at Deene appears to have been his grandson, Sir Edmund, who, according to Camden, was "an excellent improver and admirer of renowned antiquity." His first wife was a Bussey of Lincolnshire, a family which, as John Leland, who visited Deene and inspected the MSS. there, was informed, "had 1,000 li of Lands by the Yere in the tyme of Richard the Second, and . . . a great Peace of the Vale and Playne from Huntingdon to Lyncolne was of theyre Pocessiuns." The Brudenells were proud of this alliance, and their arms

together with those of Bussey are found on the porch by which the quadrangle is entered from the north and elsewhere. Sir Edmund's work includes most of the north and west sides of this quadrangle, and against a chimney breast on the outer face of the east side another piece of masonry of the same date has at some later time been built up. This contains a many-paned window, the panes filled with ashlar slabs instead of glass. Sir Edmund died in 1585, and his nephew, to whom the succession eventually passed, was created Lord Brudenell in 1627 and Earl of Cardigan in 1661. He inherited his uncle's antiquarian tastes and carried on the work at the house. He took the side of the king in the Civil War, and in consequence underwent a long imprisonment in the Tower, where "he spent his leisure hours in making abstracts, and other collections from the several records there deposited." Some of these were seen by Bridges in the library at Deene early in the eighteenth century; whether they are still there I know not. At the Restoration he returned to Deene, where his portrait, that of an old man with a long white beard, still hangs. The baron's coronet on the east side of the corner tower shows that he did not finish it till he had been raised to the peerage. The long south front is the result of several additions and alterations, and includes the ball room built by the last earl.

The church, which stands a short distance east of the house, was almost entirely rebuilt by the late Countess of Cardigan in memory of her first husband, the Balaclava hero. In the new south chapel she raised a splendid table monument, on which she reclines in white marble by the side of the earl. Sea-horses in bronze guard the four corners of the tomb, and on the sides are bas-reliefs and shields of arms. Like all the rest of the modern work, this chapel is most elaborately finished, and here the earlier Brudenell monuments have also been brought together. They include the alabaster effigies of Sir Robert Brudenell, the Chief Justice of Common Pleas, and his two wives, and a marble slab dated 1599 for another Robert, the father of the first earl. Of the original church the main arcades and the

very beautiful Early English tower and spire remain. The latter rises from a parapet, which shows that this form of spire as well as the broach was already employed in the thirteenth century.

Just beyond the " Sea Horse " a delightful lane to the right takes you up hill and down dale to the Welland valley, but we have to get back to King's Cliffe and are not for the Welland to-day. Accordingly, after a couple of miles alternately riding and wheeling along this lane, we break off from it to the right and make our way through Laxton village and Laxton park back to the King's Cliffe road at Blatherwick. Laxton Hall, we note, is shut up and tenantless, but the park is another of those engaging survivals of the open forest which abound in this neighbourhood.

You will pass through Deene again, and again set up your rest at the " Sea Horse," if you should elect to journey from King's Cliffe to Rockingham by road. This morning, however, I am going by rail and propose to take up my quarters at the friendly " Sondes Arms," one of the best-conducted inns in these parts. The station is a mile from the village and actually in Leicestershire, but the bridge which replaced the ford as far back as the thirteenth century (I do not mean to imply that the present structure is of that age) soon lands you in Northamptonshire and a good road carries you across the levels to the foot of the southern hills. A dwelling called the Hermitage once stood near the bridge and was probably inhabited by a recluse, whose business it was to guide travellers across the morass, when the land was as yet undrained and the tracks difficult to find and often submerged. The village street runs straight up the hill, bordered on either side by substantial houses of varying size and character, and derives a peculiar beauty of its own from the prevailing custom of setting lines of gaily coloured flowers along the pavement right under the walls of the smaller dwellings. On the right above the " Sondes Arms " is the market cross (for Rockingham in its earlier days boasted a market), now restored in memory of the nephew of the late and present lords of the manor.

For the first day or two of his sojourn the visitor will find his

time fully occupied with the castle and its surroundings, always remembering that the castle is a private house and to be regarded as such by every self-respecting tourist. But there comes a day—that of the annual flower show, if I am not mistaken—when the gardens and grounds are unreservedly thrown open to all comers, and hither flocks the whole countryside for miles round, gathering up the dust in every species of vehicle from the lordly motor-car to the humble farm-cart ; and here they spend the long summer afternoon in parading the terraces or cheering themselves with music in the castle hall, until as darkness falls upon the scene joy reaches its climax and the happy day closes with the illumination of the spacious lawns and parterres.

From the summit of the hill Rockingham Castle looks out across the Welland far into the shires of Leicester and Rutland. To the south-west the ancient oaks of " the New Park " spread themselves along the ridge and over the hillside almost as far as Cottingham and Carlton, while along the plateau to the east the high road from Kettering to Oakham after skirting the park for a mile takes a bend to the left and plunges down the steep descent into the village.

Now I make bold to assume that the reader who has accompanied me so far, and has safely ensconced himself at the " Sondes Arms," will not only be prepared for a short talk about the castle itself, but will not be unwilling to making some acquaintance with the many generations of its owners from the days of the Conqueror down to the present time. And herein my task is considerably lightened, for Rockingham having been a royal house, its history is on record, and I will therefore pass over five centuries, and begin from the middle of the sixteenth century when it passed into the family of its present possessors and its annals cease to be documents of State. I must premise that the fullest account of this family in print is to be found in Mr. Wise's book,[1] and if the visitor is so fortunate as to find a copy in the snug parlour looking into the courtyard of the inn, he will find ample employment for a leisure hour.

[1] Charles Wise, *Rockingham Castle and the Watsons.*

Let me take it for granted that the thoughts of the stranger to these parts on finding the names of Rockingham and Watson thus conjoined will run upon the Whig statesman who twice filled the post of first Minister to George III., and he will be surprised to hear that the said Charles Watson Wentworth, second Marquess of Rockingham, had no connection other than his title with either Rockingham or Northamptonshire. But to read this riddle aright, a few lines will have to be devoted to the intricacies of the Watson family tree, lines which those who have no taste for such matters may easily skip.

It was in the year 1615 that Rockingham finally ceased to be a royal castle. James I. then granted it (for a consideration, of course) to Sir Edward Watson, the grandson of that Edward Watson, "Causidicus," whose brass we have recently seen (p. 186) at Liddington. But to all intents and purposes the Watsons had already been lords of the castle for more than half a century, ever since Sir Edward's father, Edward Watson, Esquire, had received a lease of it from the Crown in 1554, and taking up his residence here had become the first Watson of Rockingham. It was he who began the rebuilding of the castle, which had fallen into a sad state of ruin and neglect, a work which was continued by his descendants for three generations. His grandson, Sir Lewis Watson, was in 1645 created Baron Rockingham, which dignity in the person of *his* grandson, another Lewis, was merged in an earldom (1714), but the earldom expired on the death of the third earl in 1746. And now for the marquessate of Rockingham. Edward, second Lord Rockingham, had taken to wife the Lady Anne Wentworth, a daughter of the great Earl of Strafford, and a younger son of this marriage, Thomas Watson Wentworth, for he assumed the latter name on inheriting the Wentworth estates, was the father of another Thomas, who in 1746 succeeded as sixth baron, and was created first Marquess of Rockingham. Four years later he died, and the title passed to his son Charles, the Prime Minister. On the death of this second marquess in 1782 the marquessate came to an end and the great Yorkshire estates passed

to his sister's son, the fourth Earl Fitzwilliam. Thus it was Yorkshire and not Northamptonshire that produced the statesman who carried the repeal of the American Stamp Act.

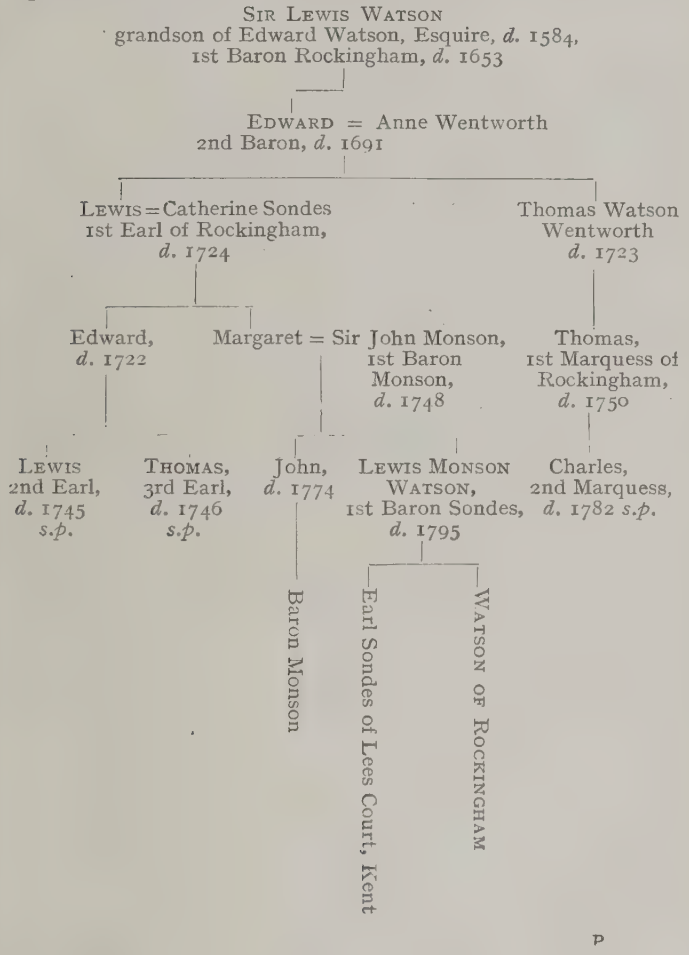
We must now show how the peerage of Sondes came into the Watson family. The three earls of Rockingham, thanks to the marriage of the first with Catherine Sondes of Lees Court, had also held the title of Viscount Sondes, and on the death of the

Rockingham Castle.

third without issue in 1746 his cousin, Lewis Monson, succeeded to the Rockingham estates, and assumed the name of Watson. In 1760 he was created Baron Sondes, and from him the present Earl Sondes is descended, but on the death of the third Baron Sondes without issue in 1836, this title and the Rockingham estates finally parted company. The title and the Kentish estates went to his next surviving brother, while Rockingham passed to his two younger brothers successively, the last of

whom (d. 1852) was the father both of the late (d. 1899) and of the present possessor.[1]

[1] The following table will make clear this rather complicated genealogy. The owners of Rockingham Castle are printed in small capitals.



To return to the story of the castle. According to Domesday the Conqueror ordered a castle to be built upon the present site, which, being as it is a tongue of land projecting northwards between two of the ravines with which the hillside is here furrowed, was exactly suited for the purpose. It may be conjectured therefore that about 1070 the usual fortification consisting of a mound with its court or bailey attached to one side of it, in this case the north, made its appearance. On the summit of the mound would be the usual tower of timber commanding the field of view. Both the mound and the bailey, which was defined by the edge of the ravines, would be surrounded by a palisade, and later—by the end of John's reign, if not before—all these wooden fortifications were replaced by stone. The extremities of the stone curtain were now carried up the sides of the mound on either side so as to have at least half of it outside the enceinte. This outer half was destroyed in the Civil War, but a similar arrangement may be seen at Arundel to this day. At the same time that they used the southern half of the mound to fill up the ditch by which it had been surrounded, the Roundheads destroyed the stone tower which had replaced the original structure of timber. This tower was probably what has been termed a Shell Keep, that is, it was not a square tower such as we have at Rochester, but a circular or polygonal enclosure open to the sky, against the inner side of which the necessary buildings were erected. Examples may be seen at Arundel, Farnham, Berkeley, and elsewhere.

At the present day the division of the castle is a triple one, with the divisions at different levels. The lowest is the entrance court at the north-eastern extremity of the site. This contains the block of buildings constituting the inhabited portion of the castle. At a slight elevation above this to the west is the second division, now the great lawn, and above this again to the south, and separated from it by a remarkable double yew hedge, is the third division backed by the remnant of the mound. This is now the flower garden.

The castle is entered through a gate-house, which, together

with the adjacent curtain, is the most ancient part of the existing buildings. It consists of a rectangular block of two stages, the gateway being flanked on either side by a semicircular tower in the style of 1260 or thereabouts. Their surface has, unfortunately, been scraped, and their battlements are modern. The entrance passage was closed by folding doors at either end, and the outer pair defended by a portcullis, the groove for which remains. The general appearance is so formidable, so mediæval indeed, that the stranger who passes into the castle for the first time is hardly prepared for the Elizabethan and Stuart façades, which now form two sides of the quadrangle. The former, however, conceals some genuine thirteenth century work, undertaken, it is believed, at the command of Edward I., who paid his first visit to Rockingham in 1275 and forthwith commanded extensive alterations and repairs. To this period belongs the hall, which, though much changed from its original appearance, still retains its walls and entrance, now used as the front door of the mansion. This doorway opened into the screens and had another doorway opposite to it opening into the inner court. The hall must originally have been of great size rising to the full height of the building and extending westward the full length of the house, but it was much disguised by the alterations made by Edward Watson (d. 1584) when he undertook the rebuilding of the castle. Some twenty years before he came into possession Rockingham had been visited by Leland. "The Castelle of Rockingham," he writes in his Itinerary, "standith upon the toppee of an hille, right stately, and hath a mighty diche, and bullwarks agayne without the diche. The utter waulles of it yet stond. The kepe is exceeding fair and strong, and in the waulles be certein strong towers. The lodgings that were within the area of the Castelle be discovered [unroofed] and faule to ruine." Edward Watson therefore had practically to build a new set of "lodgings" in the style of his own time, but he preserved what we must imagine to have been the roofless shell of the hall, while transforming it to suit his own ideas of comfort. Accordingly he divided it by two transverse

walls into two rooms separated by a passage, and by inserting the present oak roof at about half its height gave it an upper storey. On the beams the following inscription may be read: THE : HOWSE : SHAL : BE : PRESERVED : AND : NEVER : WILL : DECAYE : WHEARE : THE : ALMIGHTYE : G : D : IS : HONORED : AND : SERVED : DAYE : BY : DAYE : and the date 1579. This was five years before his death in 1584, by which time he had completed his last work, the three-gabled building between the hall and the east curtain. It was his son, Sir Edward Watson (d. 1617), who began the negotiations for the purchase of the castle outright,

Gateway, Rockingham Castle.

a transaction completed by *his* son Lewis, the first Lord Rockingham, and of him, the lord of the castle during the Civil War, something more must be said.

In 1619, three years after succeeding to the estate, Sir Lewis Watson (he did not become a peer till 1645) was able to add to his possessions the park, which has since formed one of its chief adornments. This "New Park," as it was then called, had been enclosed in the time of Henry VII. and a lodge had been erected in it for the King's use on the occasion of royal hunting visits to Rockingham. This lodge, which had been kept

up by the Watsons, was pulled down by the third Lord Sondes (1806–1836), but traces of its moat can still be discerned on the drive through the park to Cottingham. The acquisition of the park may have suggested to Sir Lewis in the peaceful days before the outbreak of the war a work which Mr. Wise is inclined to attribute to him, namely, the replacement of the curtain wall on the north and west sides of the castle by the present revetment, thus throwing open the extensive view across the Welland valley. The war, however, broke up all his schemes for the improvement of his estate, and from March, 1643, he was an exile from his home. During this period the castle was in the hands of the Parliament, who decided to make it one of the strongest positions in this part of the country. With this object they surrounded the mound with stockades, fitted up the keep as barracks, and planted guns to command the approaches. Mr. Wise has reproduced a curious plan of these fortifications, now preserved at the castle, and we have already seen how they were dismantled and the whole position slighted at the end of the war. Meanwhile the Royalists made several unsuccessful attempts to capture the place, and Mr. Wise has been able to rescue from oblivion a simple local tradition connected with these proceedings, which runs as follows: "One night the sentinels within the castle walls were alarmed by sounds which indicated the stealthy approach of a body of besiegers. Their challenge not being answered, the sentinels fired. The awakened garrison rushed to their aid, and a general fusillade ensued. Instead of the return fire they anticipated, they were answered by a succession of most unearthly sounds, which increased their alarm, and made them fancy themselves confronted by something diabolical. Nor daring to venture on a sortie until daylight, they passed some very uncomfortable hours, until dawn revealed to them the fact that the supposed besieging force was a herd of swine strayed thither from the neighbouring forest."

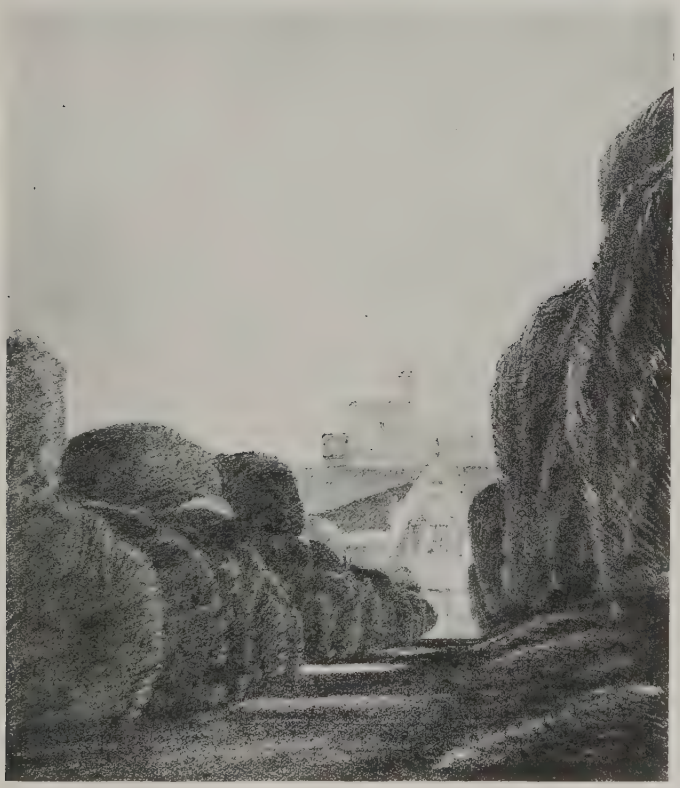
After the war was over Lord Rockingham returned to the castle to find it sadly devastated. Till his death in 1653 he seems to have devoted himself to the repair of the damage—a

work carried on by his son, who rebuilt the wing facing the visitor as he enters the castle and erected what is known as "Walker's house" north of the gate-house. The wing in question contains on its first floor the Long Gallery, and the two towers were added by Salvin in the middle of the last century. With this exception the castle remains very much as it was left by the second Lord Rockingham at the end of the seventeenth century. To him also may perhaps be assigned the planting of the splendid yew hedge separating the second and third baileys.

We have still to visit the church which lies just below, but we must first go back for a moment to the earliest days of the castle, when the memorable incident took place by which Rockingham is best known in history. This was the Council held at the castle by William Rufus to decide the conflicting claims of the Sovereign and the Pope to the allegiance of ecclesiastics. The form taken by the dispute is well known. Was the Archbishop to receive his pallium, the symbol of his office, at the hands of the Pope or of the King? As afterwards, when Becket defied Henry II. at Northampton, the Council assembled in one apartment while the King remained in another. For four days Anselm, while professing his duty to the Crown in all temporal matters, persisted in his refusal to acknowledge any other authority in matters spiritual than that of the Pope, and the assembly broke up without any definite settlement of the question. The matter was afterwards compromised. The Archbishop agreed to send for the pallium instead of going to Rome for it himself, and to take it off the high altar of his cathedral with his own hands. The details of the Council must be sought elsewhere, but never again did Rockingham play so prominent a part in public affairs.

Like other royal castles, Rockingham was placed in charge of a Constable, who, except upon the occasional visits of the Sovereign, was the supreme authority. Most of our kings seem to have visited the castle for the sake of hunting down to the time of Edward III., whose last recorded visit took place in 1375. What part, if any, was played by Rockingham in the

Wars of the Roses is not known, but at any rate it had now fallen into neglect, and in Leland's time, as we have noted, was positively in a ruinous condition. How it recovered from this



The Yew Walk, Rockingham Castle.

state and from its subsequent disasters we have already seen: long may it flourish under the loving care which later generations have so abundantly bestowed upon it!

The church is almost entirely modern. The original building

was broken down and defaced by the Roundheads during their occupation of the castle, but when Lord Rockingham returned to his own again, he began to rebuild it. In his will he ordered that his body should be buried in the chancel "wherein my Father and Grandfather doe lye buried . . . Not doubting but that Place, though it have Lately undergon the rude Treatment of a rash hand, yet that in due Tyme, by God's good Blessing, either by my Selfe or soon of mine, the same may come to be rebuilt again." There is, however, no memorial of him in the church except the entry of his burial in the register. It was this seventeenth century church which was described by Bridges as "a low irregular fabric," and seems to have consisted of a nave, chancel and north chapel. Some portions of it are incorporated in the present edifice, which is, however, largely a creation of the last century. Thus the tower dates from 1845, the north aisle and porch from 1863, the south chapel from 1868, and the vestry from 1873.

In the south chapel have been collected most of the monuments and memorial tablets of the Watsons. The table tomb in the centre Mr. Wise considers to be the united remains of two distinct tombs broken up at the destruction of the church, the one that of Edward Watson (died 1584) and his wife Dorothy Montagu, and the other that of his son Sir Edward Watson (died 1617) and his wife Anne Digby, and he believes that the reconstructed monument supports the effigies of Sir Edward Watson, distinguished by his knight's spurs, and of his mother Dorothy Montagu.[1] Of the other memorials in this chapel the most striking are the marble figures of two of the daughters of the second Lord Rockingham, Margaret, who died unmarried $171\frac{3}{4}$, and Arabella, the wife of Sir James Oxenden, who died $173\frac{4}{5}$. Both are fine examples of the monumental style of their time. Two other monuments of the same period are in the chancel; on the north side of the altar that of "Anna, Baronissa Rockingham, Uxor Edvardi

[1] The dress and general appearance of the female figure show it to be of an earlier date than Anne Digby, who died 1611. Wise, pp. 46–47.

Baronis ROCKINGHAM, Filia natu Maxima THOMAE Comitis STRAFFORDIAE" (died $169\frac{5}{6}$), and on the south side that of her son the first earl (died $172\frac{3}{4}$) and his countess, Katharine Sondes (died $169\frac{5}{6}$). The earl is habited in the toga and holds a helmet in his hand, and in the course of the long inscription we learn that "The House, of which it's Lord was first styl'd Baron, once garrison'd in Defence of Ch. I, | Still wears the Scars of prosperous Rebellion, and unsuccessful Loyalty. | The Sufferings and Abilities of STRAFFORD nor ought, nor could, be buried in Obscurity. | And FEVERSHAM'S [the countess's father, Sir George Sondes, was created Viscount Sondes and Earl of Feversham] Zeal for Two Kings in Distress render'd the Grace to Him a Gift of Gratitude. | Happy the Nobles born with so great Lustre: More happy, who reflect it back again, | Proving the Virtues of their brave Progenitors, no less hereditary than their Honours." The last two lines no doubt sound grandiose to us, but they nevertheless give expression to a truth which recent events (1915) have done much to emphasise.

CHAPTER X

GRETTON—KIRBY—WELDON—CORBY—MARSTON TRUSSELL —SIBBERTOFT

> But O short pleasure, bought with lasting paine!
> Why will hereafter anie flesh delight
> In earthlie blis, and joy in pleasures vaine,
> Since that I sawe this gardine wasted quite,
> That where it was scarce seemed anie sight?
> That I, which once that beautie did beholde,
> Could not from teares my melting eyes with-holde.
>
> —*The Ruines of Time.*

"And of course you will see Kirby, one of the most glorious houses in the county a century ago, but now a sad ruin." Yes, I certainly would; a deserted house is a dreary spectacle enough, but then there can be no difficulties in the way of visiting it, at any rate at Kirby there are none, for the shepherd and his family who tenant one corner of the huge mansion will give you a cordial welcome, and such refreshment as you require.

It will be the wisest course, if you are inclined for a good walk, to make the journey to Kirby on foot, and persuade your host of the "Sondes Arms" to meet you at Deene with his two-wheeled cart and drive you home through Weldon and Corby. The turn to the right at the cross roads will take you along under the hill for a couple of miles till you climb the steep slope to Gretton, a large straggling village of attractive aspect, but without any good quarters for the tourist. At the top of the green are the stocks and whipping post, and just below is the church with a tall fifteenth century tower at the west end. The plan of the church is cruciform

and like King's Cliffe it has evidently been enlarged from a small plain Norman edifice. Two of the arches of the original church remain on each side of the nave, connected by pointed arches with the chancel, while to the west are narrower pointed arches, showing that the tower was built outside the church and these arches put in to fill up the space.[1] Above the arcade on either side the jamb and part of the head of a window remain, unmistakable evidence that the arcades were

Kirby Hall.

cut in the side walls of the original church. In the south transept is some curious early English arcading with dog-tooth ornament.

It is another couple of miles across the fields to Kirby, and it is good to make your first approach this way, for it gives you an idea of the remoteness of its situation, and adds a spice of adventure and discovery to your expedition. For a long time nothing is to be seen to give you any token of the whereabouts

[1] The same thing took place at Oundle, but the space was there filled in with solid masonry.

of your search, and you may easily chance to wander from the right track. However, at last, about half a mile away you will catch a glimpse of an indefinite grey mass dimly visible amid the trees, and perhaps a curl of smoke rising from the shepherd's fire. Be of good courage, therefore, and you will soon arrive at the outer court of the ruin. Through this you must pass, and then leaving it by a side door, you are in a spacious green now dedicated to cocks and hens but once the well-kept garden of the mansion. When Bridges saw the place early in the eighteenth century the gardens were "beautiful, stocked with a great variety of exotic plants, and adorned with a wilderness composed of almost the whole variety of English trees, and ranged in elegant order." Cross the green and sit down under the trees at the far corner, where you can contemplate the long west side of the house, and the greater part of the south side. From this post of observation you will also make out the dim, grass-grown terraces, and look down upon the fish-ponds—a necessary adjunct of all great houses down to comparatively recent times—now choked with weeds.

Here then I will leave the visitor to his reflections and repose, but I take it that sooner or later he will begin to wonder how it came about that so splendid a mansion with all the amenities of a country residence was ever allowed to fall into the melancholy condition in which we now behold it. To render it habitable now would indeed require unnumbered riches, but there must surely have been a time when but a modest outlay would have sufficed to arrest its decay.

A glance at the building is enough to show that it belongs to an advanced period of the Renaissance architecture, and in fact a record remains which proves that it was begun early in the second decade of Elizabeth's reign. In the Soane Museum is preserved the original plan of the architect, John Thorpe, with the inscription "Kerby whereof I layd y^e^ first stone A° 1570," and for the next five years the building went steadily on. One would imagine that Sir Humphrey Stafford, for it was he who gave the architect his commission, must have had vast sums of

ready money at his disposal, seeing that he already had a good house at Blatherwick, only four miles away. Did he propose that the stately pile he now contemplated should henceforward be the chief residence of his family, and that Staffords of Blatherwick should become Staffords of Kirby? However that may be, the house was barely finished when he died, and his son forthwith sold it to no less a person than the Queen's favourite, Sir Christopher Hatton of Holdenby. By this purchase Sir Chris-

Kirby Hall.

topher found himself with two country houses of the first rank within five and twenty miles of each other, to say nothing of his town house and the estates lavished upon him in other parts of the country. Whether he ever saw very much of Kirby himself may be doubted. He died in 1591 at the age of fifty-two, and in 1580, five years after he came into possession of the place, we find him writing to a friend that he is going to Sir Edmund Brudenell's at Deene "to view my house of Kirby,

which I have never yet surveyed ; leaving my other shrine, I mean Holdenby [the new house just finished or finishing] still unseen until that holy saint [the Queen] shall sit in it, to whom it is dedicated." But little as Sir Christopher can have been at Kirby, his heirs enjoyed it for the remainder of the two hundred and fifty years of its prosperity, first his sister's son, Sir William Newport, and then the descendants of his first cousin, John Hatton of Cambridgeshire.[1] The first of these, another Sir Christopher Hatton, succeeded to the estate on the death of Sir William Newport in 1596, and was the progenitor of a line of Barons and Viscounts Hatton which came to an end in 1762. Kirby then passed to two sisters of the last viscount, one of whom married Daniel Finch, the seventh Earl of Winchilsea and second Earl of Nottingham (p. 170), whose descendant is its present owner. George Finch-Hatton, cousin of the ninth and father of the tenth Earl of Winchilsea, died in 1823, and it was about this time that Kirby finally ceased to be inhabited. One would have thought that though, like Haddon Hall, it was no longer the residence of its owners, like Haddon Hall it would have been a mere matter of common prudence to keep it weather-tight. As we have seen, however, no steps were taken to provide even this minimum of security. The natural results followed, and the Kirby of to-day is an almost roofless ruin, though it is some consolation to know that measures are now taken to preserve its walls from further decay.

The principal apartments of the house are built round a long courtyard running north and south with the main entrance in the north side. Opposite to this, in the centre of the south side is the two-storeyed porch of the hall leading into the screens. The elaborate gable which terminates this porch with its series of eight classical pilasters has, says Mr. Gotch,[2] no counterpart in England. The window and balcony over

[1] Two of the Hattons held the office of Governor of Guernsey under Charles II., so that even then there must have been lengthy periods of non-residence.

[2] *Early Renaissance Architecture in England*, 1914, p. 64.

the doorway are part of Inigo Jones's additions. On the right is the hall rising the whole height of the building. Its barrel vault is " formed of four straight faces, each face divided into panels by moulded and cut oak ribs, and each panel has a curved diagonal rib."[1] On the left is a range of windows similar to those of the hall, but divided within to light an upper and lower storey. The kitchens are behind to the south-east. On the east and west sides of the court were the " lodgings," a suite of two or three rooms, each set with its separate door leading into the court, and over those on the west side was the long gallery 150 ft. by 16 ft. Each set of rooms communicated with its neighbour, so that it was possible for anyone starting at the south-west corner to go right round on the inside to the south-east corner, but to reach the hall and drawing-rooms the tenants of the lodgings had to brave the weather and cross the court, just as the members of the Oxford and Cambridge colleges have to do to this day. On the north side of the court is an open arcade or loggia, the earliest instance of the kind in England, says Mr. Gotch. Facing south it would, of course, receive the rays of the midday sun at the coldest seasons of the year and thus afford a convenient promenade.

The outer or entrance court is entered from within through the north side of the inner court, and is fenced on its other three sides by a balustrade. It is this north side of the house which underwent the chief of Inigo Jones's alterations about 1638-40. He inserted the Palladian window frames and built up a kind of clock tower over the entrance. He also inserted the excellent gateways in the centre of each of the sides of the outer court, and these were the last additions of any moment that the house received.

Very little seems to be known of the domestic life of its successive owners when at Kirby. Sir Humphrey Stafford has left his family motto, IE SERAY LOYAL, on the hall porch and his initials, crest, and the Stafford Knot are frequently repeated on the carved bands that are carried round the court

[1] Gotch, *op. cit.* p. 161.

above the windows. In 1654, in the first Lord Hatton's time, the house was seen by Evelyn, who thought it "very noble . . . built *à la moderne;* the garden and stables agreeable, but the avenue was ungraceful and the seate [site] naked." Forty years later, however, the second lord had repaired the garden walls and coping, gravelled the walks, and was well known as an amateur of gardening and arboriculture.[1] Bridges's description of it a few years later still has already been quoted. A century later, when it had come into the hands of the Finch-Hattons, it is said to have been suggested as a suitable retreat for George III. and his family in the event of the threatened French invasion becoming a fact.

But it is time to continue our journey. I have said little or nothing of the details of the ornamentation lavished on almost every part of the building, and nothing of the two great bow windows of the south front, and the enthusiastic student of Renaissance architecture will doubtless feast his eyes upon the building much longer than I can wait for him, for the cart is already waiting for me at the "Sea Horse," so after crossing the brook and ascending the avenue I gain the road and am soon once more at Deene.

Getting another glimpse of Deene Hall and Church as we drive past them we soon turn to the right and reach the twin villages of Great and Little Weldon. Here are the quarries from which is obtained the famous building stone which we have already had occasion to mention. There is a tradition that Old St. Paul's was built of it, and have we not just been witnesses of its capabilities as material for the chisel at Kirby? "It is obtained," says Mr. M. W. Brown of Oundle,[2] "in the simplest manner, being sawn down in great rectangular blocks until the 'bed' is reached, when wedges are driven in beneath. These loosen the entire block, which is then placed upon a trolley and hauled up ready for carting." At Little Weldon was Hunter's Manor, held by the Hereditary Masters of the Royal Buckhounds

[1] *Hatton Correspondence*, Camden Society, vol. ii, *passim*.
[2] *Northamptonshire*, Cambridge County Handbooks.

—a pack which must be distinguished from the "Privy Pack" established probably by Henry VIII., and which, together with its mastership, has been abolished in our own time—one of whose duties it was to attend the Sovereign whenever he came to hunt in Rockingham Forest. The last King who is known to have hunted here is James I., so that when, in 1633, Sir Lewis Watson purchased the Mastership and the manor attached to it from the Brocas family, in whose hands the office had been for many generations, he had little to do except to keep up the pack for his own amusement. He died in 1653, and transmitted the office to his descendants, who seem to have drawn the salary up to the time of the Revolution. In the next century, however, the office became purely honorary, and at last lapsed altogether. The last of the family who attempted to revive any of its privileges was Lewis, first Lord Sondes, who came to the estates in 1746 and held them till his death in 1795. In this connection Mr. Wise, to whom I am indebted for my information relating to Hunter's Manor, writes:

"In the billiard room at Rockingham Castle is a highly coloured painting representing a gentleman, seemingly of some importance, carrying a large horn round his neck, the emblem of the Master of the Buckhounds. His three-cornered hat, edged with feathers, and his general appearance indicate a man of higher rank than the rest of 'the field,' which seems to consist almost exclusively of attendants—two of whom wear the Monson-Watson livery. They and the pack of hounds are eagerly pursuing a fox, who is represented as leisurely trotting up a hill on a well-marked road, leading apparently to two villages seen a short distance off. Reynard shows some contempt for his pursuers.

"The picture is said to be a rude copy from a painting by that sporting artist of the last century, Sartorius. It was bought many years since out of a cottage at Corby, a village in close proximity to Hunter's Manor, and has always been said to represent Lewis, First Baron Sondes, and his pack of hounds. And until well within the present [19th] century Rockingham

has always boasted the possession of a private pack of hounds, and the master of it is said to have asserted, and to have exercised the right to hunt wherever and whenever he pleased, any prescribed rights of the Pytchley Hunt notwithstanding. This has much the appearance of a continued assertion of the special privileges that were attached to the Hereditary Mastership." [1]

At Weldon we are on the high road from Stamford to Kettering, and if we go straight on we shall pass the primitive village of Stanion with its extremely graceful steeple, which Mr. Griggs has so cleverly sketched. The church, a chapel of ease to Brigstock, is dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, and Mr. Hamilton Thompson suggests that the prominence given to the north chapel, which is practically a second chancel, may be due to the desire to provide altars of equal dignity for both saints. Our return route to Rockingham, however, diverges to the right and brings us to the flaming furnaces of the Corby ironworks. These works appear to be doing a roaring trade, if one may judge from the flare and smoke, and, not to mince matters, Corby is now positively transformed into a miniature black country. This, however, does not extend very far, and we are soon amidst the scattered remnants of the forest once more. Corby church is a good specimen of Early English with a Decorated chancel, and a lofty porch vaulted in three bays. The whole has been restored and a north aisle added. Every twenty years, under the pretended shelter of a charter conferred by Queen Bess, the village keeps high festival; the roads are barred and everyone entering the place is compelled either to sit in the stocks or to ride astride on a pole carried through the streets by the villagers. He will, I imagine, prefer to escape these penalties by the payment of a small fine. Old customs have a way of harking back to remote antiquity, and it is not impossible that the prehistoric people who are known to have dwelt in this district may also have indulged in periodic pranks of a similar kind. My usual welcome awaits me at the "Sondes Arms," and my next excursion is to take me further afield.

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 177, 178.

Of all places which the humble cyclist endeavours to reach, the famous field of Naseby seems to be the most difficult, or is it that I have been singularly unfortunate? I only know that

Stanion.

I have made two several efforts to get there, once from the north and once from the south, and have been foiled each time; Naseby village I attained and Sibbertoft I attained, but thus far and no farther did fate permit me to penetrate.

At any rate, it is with the best intentions that I take the train to Market Harborough, eponymous to Whyte-Melville's most successful story, and—instead of drinking my "morning" with Mr. Sawyer, Parson Dove, and the Honourable Crasher and then devouring the way—find I have sustained a puncture, and so, entrusting my machine to a professional, I go in search of bread and cheese. It is the deadest time of the year in Market Harborough, for it wants still some two months to the opening of the season, and a dull, drizzly sky plunges the vivacious sporting centre into its gloomiest mood—no balls now, no approving mammas, no "Papas with white gloves and red faces slapping each others' backs, and talking about yesterday's gallop," no flutterings in the "Dove-cote." I do my best to recover my spirits at the melancholy inn, and then set off with a sinking heart through the rain to Lubenham, when—another puncture! What am I to do? I seek out a friendly smith well used to these little offices and then fill up the necessary wait by a walk to the church, but I am now in Leicestershire, and am therefore privileged to keep silence. At last I set off once more, though the afternoon is now wearing on, and having crossed the infant Welland find myself once more in Northamptonshire, and, what is more, at Marston Trussell, two miles from Sibbertoft and three or four, up hill and down dale, from Naseby field.

Now it is said that this village was known as "pudding-poke Marston," because the road formerly came to a full stop here (it certainly does nothing of the kind now), and that consequently a number of the defeated party in their headlong flight from Naseby northwards were unable to get any further and were cut to pieces and buried in the churchyard.[1] It is common knowledge that the place gets its distinctive name from a family which lorded it here from the time of Henry II., and even earlier, down to that of Henry VII., when Elizabeth Trussell carried the estates to her husband John de Vere, fifteenth Earl of Oxford. For the rest one of the Trussells was slain at

[1] See *post*, p. 247.

Evesham, and this seems to be all that history can do for them:

> Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
> They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.

There is not much to detain us in the church, but we may take a look at the kneeling effigy in alabaster of Marke Brewster of London, merchant, who was "free of the Iremongers' Company" and died at far away Moscow in 1612, where he no doubt left his bones. But he must either have been Marston born or had some other connection with the place, for he left £40 to buy a great bell, and £3 10s. to the poor.

So on for a mile or two along the flat and then a steep climb up to the plateau on which stands Sibbertoft, the northern outpost of the battle, as the village of Naseby was the south. On my left as I ascend is Fox Hill, a spur jutting out northwards between two ravines and fortified with an ancient entrenchment. South of this is a hillock 600 feet above sea level on which the Royal Standard was raised the morning of the battle. A short distance on the other side of the village is the source of the Welland, which soon turns to the north-east and becomes the county boundary. The church has been much modernised. In Bridges's time it still retained its rood loft "gilt and finely carved." It had survived the Puritan zeal through the influence of a local family, but seems to have perished owing to the indifference of eighteenth or early nineteenth century vicars and churchwardens. Its stairs now conduct the preacher into his pulpit. From a brass of 1564 still remaining it seems that a priest of the old order, who had not found himself able to conform to the changes in the church, had sought a refuge for his declining years in this remote corner of the county:

> Anthony Atkyns
> Atkyns priest religious and lerned,
> Not haveying where to dwell,
> Wanderinge sycke at last here stayed
> Tyll deathe did lyfe expell.

In the last century Sibbertoft vicarage was the home of two men of note, Canon Thomas James, the writer of the much-quoted Northamptonshire article in the *Quarterly*, vicar 1838–1863, and M. J. Berkeley, F.R.S., the cryptogamic botanist, vicar 1868–1889.

With the day before me I might now push on across Naseby field to the opposite heights, but the autumn afternoon is well advanced and the prospect of being benighted in these desolate uplands, hardly less than a score of miles away from the "Sondes Arms," is, to say the least, unattractive; so perforce I have to leave Naseby unvisited, and retrace my route to the station at Market Harborough. Should the reader share my disappointment, I will endeavour to make him amends in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI

BRIXWORTH—FOXTON—COTTESBROOKE—NASEBY—LAMPORT

WHAT sportsman or what antiquary—not that these categories are by any means mutually exclusive—has not heard of Brixworth, Brixworth the home of the world-renowned Pytchley pack, and—such at any rate is the boast of all patriotic Brixworthians—the possessor of the oldest church in England? The high road from Market Harborough to Northampton forms the main street of the village, and passes the door of "The Coach and Horses," where I have now set up my rest. It then drops into the hollow which divides Brixworth into two distinct portions to thread the southern and more populous quarter and to emerge once more into the open country. In this southern quarter are the kennels, but the hounds are now away for the summer ranging over the spacious fields of Althorp, so that I can have no sight of them, and must confine myself to the northern quarter, at the highest part of which stands the church. But first a word on the dividing hollow, the nine or ten fresh springs which issue from the sides whereof are said never to have failed, and must have made the spot a suitable settlement from the earliest times. Bridges tells us how one of these in his day gushed into an ornamental basin decorated with animal figures and inscribed "Ex dono Margaretae Bartlett 1631." This charitable lady was a member of one of the leading families of the place.

And now for the church. The spire, a conspicuous landmark of the surrounding country, rises from a tower, against the western

face of which is built another of those curious rounded turrets which attracted our curiosity at Brigstock. The church itself at first sight appears to be a long, aisleless building with a south

Brixworth Church.

chapel and an apsidal chancel, but a closer inspection reveals the fact that embodied in the side walls are blocked arcades consisting of round arches cut through the solid wall and clear evidence of the former existence of aisles. These

arches are mainly constructed of Roman bricks, and a round-headed window in imitation of those of the clerestory has been inserted in each. Brixworth, of course, did not escape the usual lot of mediæval churches, and successive generations pulled down and built up as seemed good in their eyes, but at any rate they had a style of their own, and their alterations were made in their own manner. It was reserved for the nineteenth century to falsify the historical record, to replace the record of former generations by imitations, for the aim of the hierophants of the Gothic revival was not so much to preserve what they found as to replace it by what, according to their ideas, it ought to be. At Brixworth, accordingly, the work of all the centuries since the eleventh must go, and the church must be "restored" as much as possible to its pre-Norman appearance. It was in 1863 that our innovators set to work. To begin with, they pulled down a rectangular chancel of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, and built up the present apse upon the old foundations. The south chapel had been built as long ago as the year 1300, to which period there is reason for ascribing the destruction of the aisles, but it was now shortened at its western extremity, and the old blockings of the arches with their late Gothic windows were replaced by new blockings with windows "in the original style." The masonry was pointed, thus concealing the Saxon mortar, and lastly, without rhyme or reason, the twelfth century south porch was swept away. We may breathe again when we find that this vandalism went no further and that the west wall and tower were left untouched. To them we shall return directly, but first for the part east of the nave.

Between nave and apse is a choir or presbytery now separated from the former by a single wide pointed arch, probably of fourteenth century date, but excavations have shown that its place was originally occupied by an arcade of three arches, the widest in the centre, and even now in the north jamb of the present arch the visitor will notice the remains of the springing of the northernmost of the

three. Two arches of different dates have been cut in the south wall of the presbytery to communicate with the chapel, and above them may be seen the upper part of a large round-headed window by which the presbytery was lighted before the addition of the chapel. In the chapel itself is the effigy of a knight in chain armour, probably that of Sir John de Verdon, who may well have been its founder. In the floor are two fourteenth century gravestones, one of them being that of a vicar, Adam de Tauntone, died $133\frac{4}{5}$.

East of the presbytery is the apse. From some slight fragments which remain of the earlier apse—itself superseded by the rectangular chancel destroyed in 1863—it appears that it was, as the present one is externally, polygonal in form, its bays being divided externally by angular-faced pilasters, and there is also reason for thinking that, early as this apse must have been, it was built upon the site of one still earlier and completely semicircular. The sunken ambulatory surrounding the exterior of the apse is now open to the sky, but traces of its barrel vault remain. It was entered by short flights of steps leading down from doors on either side of the arch dividing the presbytery from the apse. Pilgrims visiting the relics preserved in the mural recesses of the ambulatory would descend one of these flights, pass round it, and re-enter the church by the other.

Before coming to the west end, it will be well to set down the conclusions that have been reached as to the first beginnings of the church. Structural evidence undoubtedly points to a very early Saxon date, and such a date is borne out by a story recorded in the *Peterborough Chronicle* to the effect that about 680 a colony of monks from that abbey migrated to Brixworth and founded a cell there. They seem to have utilised in the construction of their church the materials of some ruined Roman buildings which they found near at hand, and the framework of the present nave with its many Roman bricks, and the two lower stages of the tower, may well be their work. The Danish inroads a couple of centuries later seem to have rendered

necessary some reconstruction and repairs, and the alteration of the shape of the apse from circular to polygonal may have been part of the work then carried out. About two centuries later still came the changes at the west end, which we have now to consider.

If the visitor will take up his stand in the nave and face west he will see at the ground level a doorway opening into the tower and arched with Roman bricks. Above this he will notice another doorway, also round-headed but now blocked up, and immediately over this, and cutting into its head, a window of three narrow lights separated by baluster shafts. This upper doorway evidently led into some room behind the wall, and the window must subsequently have been cut through the wall to enable persons in that room to look down into the church. The door would, of course, have been useless, unless approached from the nave either by a ladder or by a flight of steps leading to a small platform or gallery. We may now pass outside, and endeavour to follow the successive changes which have resulted in the tower and spire as we see them to-day. But it will be ultimately necessary for the visitor who wishes to follow the story in detail to ascend the interior of the tower at least as high as the fourth, or belfry, stage.

The right course to follow in unravelling the history of a building is, of course, to begin at the end and work backwards, peeling off, as it were, the successive coats till the original nucleus is reached, but as this process has already been so thoroughly carried out by competent antiquaries, I shall content myself with stating the results in chronological sequence. Imagine yourself, therefore, surveying the west end of the church from the spot where the vicarage now stands at any period you like down to the middle of the eleventh century. Instead of the tower you see a fine lofty porch with a gabled roof. Just above the spacious entrance is a window, showing that, as we have so often seen elsewhere, there is a room over the porch and beneath the gabled roof. It is this room that is entered by the (now blocked) doorway and steps within the

church. What the use of this room was can, I fear, only be a theme for fruitless guesses, but if we might suppose that it came to be the resort of some influential personage, the lord of the manor, for example, we may understand that he would find it convenient to have some means of taking part in the sacred offices without the trouble of descending into the church, and to this end what could be simpler than to cut a window in the wall large enough for himself and one or two companions? You also notice a small flanking building on either side of the porch, entered by small doorways in its sides; these buildings have disappeared, though not without leaving traces behind them; indeed the tower is to-day entered by the southern of the two doorways. Such then is the first of our visions.

For the second, if your patience is not already exhausted, stand upon the same spot at a later period, say about ten years after the Norman Conquest. The scene is changed. The porch with its side chambers and gabled roof has apparently vanished, and in its place you are confronted with a tower and projecting turret, but still without spire or pinnacles. For all that, the porch of our first vision has not been swept away, it has only been transformed. The people of Brixworth have resolved to have a tower to their church. But for all that they will not be at the trouble and expense of taking down their porch. No, the simpler course is to remove the roof and raise the walls to a height which admits of three storeys above what has now become a basement chamber, such is the new rôle of the old porch; the room over it has become a first floor chamber, above that is the second floor, and above that again the belfry. The next step is to give an easy means of access to these several storeys, and for this purpose the staircase turret is built up against the face of what is now the tower. The wide outer arch of the porch, now concealed by the turret, is blocked, but a small doorway is left in the blocking which gives access from the tower to the lobby at the foot of the stair; while the inner arch opens as before into the church. What was formerly the window over the porch entrance has now become a

door leading from the turret stair into the first floor chamber, and some steps higher up a rude opening in the wall gives access to the second floor chamber—a device again repeated for the belfry. Furthermore, now that the first floor room with its convenient three-light window can be entered from the turret stair, the former entrance from the interior of the church is no longer required; it is therefore blocked up, as we see it to-day. Lastly, some 250 years later, in the early part of the fourteenth century the belfry stage was rebuilt and crowned with pinnacles and a broach spire. It may have been at this period that the top of the staircase and its vaulted roof were broken away. To sum up, this is the only church we shall meet with in the course of our rambles which dates back as far as the seventh century, and I think the reader will now agree with me that it is worth his minuter study, and to that I leave him.

Several excursions may be made from Brixworth, but I shall have to limit myself to two. The first will occupy a spare afternoon, and if the morning has been devoted to church architecture the change to the open road will be agreeable. It is true that the ride to the north-east through the villages of Scaldwell and Wold (the W is often dropped with quite a Celtic facility) is of no particular interest, but as soon as the hard road is left for the retired hamlet of Foxton an atmosphere of romance begins to make itself felt. Leave your machine at the farm, and stroll down the deserted avenue to the little brook, now gay with willow-herb, and overgrown with sedge, then ascend the steep grassy track on the further side, and you will have arrived at Foxton, or all that is left of it. The handful of cottages and the decaying church bespeak a spot upon which fortune has ceased to smile, and which melancholy has marked for her own. For all that, the place has had its day. Look at those green banks and mounds between you and the church, you have seen the same thing elsewhere, and not only in Northamptonshire, and you need no ghost from the grave to tell you what they mean.

Let us see what Bridges has to say: "Here is an antient

manor-house formerly the residence of the Nicolls family. Under a stone dial over the gate is this inscription :

Anno primo {MDCXXV} Caroli primi
Ne dispar quid displiceat
Nam trium Consanguineorum tribus ac
Regnantibus hoc exiguum opus est.

On the other side of the gate fronting the house :

Tres successivi possessores
Anna Austinus et Franciscus
Tribus Principibus invicem succedentibus
Elizabetha Jacobo et Carolo."

Thus while three Sovereigns succeeded each other on the English throne three generations of Nicolls reigned at Foxton and built the family mansion. Bridges probably visited the place at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when Foxton was in all its glory, but a century later some relics of the house, the gateway, at any rate, seem to have been still standing. Of "Austinus" we shall have more to say directly. The last Nicolls died in 1717 ; after this for some fifty years the place belonged successively to the Danvers, and the Rainsfords of Brixworth, and finally passed to the Ishams, who having a good house of their own at Lamport, not far away, did not go to the expense of keeping up another, and had it pulled down. The very extent of the site is enough to prove that it must have been a great house, inaccessible though it must have been to any but the heaviest wheel traffic. But the Nicolls, Danvers and Rainsfords no doubt made their journeys on horseback, and some moonlight night you may perchance meet some of them threading their weary way through the ghostly shadows of the avenue after a long day at Northampton sessions or a more than usually exciting race meeting at Harborough.

The church is an unpretentious edifice with a double bell cot at the west end, and consists of a nave, south aisle, and chancel. The latter has been scraped and put into repair with modern windows in the early Decorated style. It retains, however, a low side window on either side ; that on the south side has a

transom, the lower part having been, as was usual, closed with a shutter. The rest of the church is fast falling into decay, and not the least ruinous feature in it is the mural monument above, the nave arcade of Augustine Nicolls, a judge of the

Spratton Church.

Common Pleas under James I. There he kneels in his robes between the standing presentments of Justice and Wisdom. He died far away at Kendal in 1616 while on the northern circuit, "aet. 57." Less than a hundred years after its erection the monument was "new adorned" by his descendant—and looks as if it had never been touched since. Foxton is a chapel of ease

to Lamport, and the good fourteenth century chancel arch, its capitals carved with heads and oak leaves, is a clue to its date. In those far-off days the place belonged to the family of De Welles, already mentioned in connection with the fight at Bloody Oaks.

As I descend the hill to Brixworth station on my second excursion, the spire of Spratton invites me to bear to the left, but I resist this temptation and cross the railway and the northern Nene close to the spot where the late Sir Charles Knightley made his famous jump with the Pytchley, still known as "Sir Charles's Leap." My road then runs through the fields to Cottesbrooke, a charming village embowered in trees and notable for its comfortable rectory house, fourteenth century church, and eighteenth century Hall. When I recall my visit I shall not easily forget the courteous old rector who accompanied me to the church, a type of the genial sporting parson once so common, but now, alas! nearly extinct. Of a good stock himself, he displayed a benevolent interest in the fortunes of the family who had then recently quitted the Hall after more than two and a half centuries of ownership, and of whose sepulchre he was the careful guardian. Since that day he has passed to another world and joined the mighty hunters of the past.

A Cottage at Spratton.

The Hall, a sensible red brick edifice of George II.'s time, standing in an extensive park, is now the property of Captain Brassey, a cousin of the Squire of Apethorpe, but both this house and its predecessor had long been the home of the Lang-

ham family, founded by Alderman John Langham, who himself hailed from this county but, having had the luck to be "bred a Turkey Merchant," made a large fortune, and was created a baronet at the Restoration. He was the founder of the free school at Guilsborough, which we shall visit later on, and of the still existing hospital at Cottesbrooke for six poor widows and two widowers. These were not the only benefits he conferred upon his native county, but for all that he was apparently too high-flown a Tory to please Bishop Burnet, who, writing of a Committee of the House of Commons in 1668, describes him as "a very weak man, famed only for his readiness of speaking florid *Latin*, which he had attained to a degree beyond any man of the age; but his style was too poetical, and full of Epithets and Figures." He lived to be 87, a great age for those days, and his handsome table tomb of black and white marble stands in the centre of a gallery which fills the whole of the south transept of the church, and covers the family vault. He lies clad in his alderman's robe with the wife he survived for a score of years beside him. The effigies are probably the work of John Stone, and are careful portraits. Against the wall is another striking monument to the Redes, a family which preceded the Langhams. John Rede, who married Isabell Lane of Cottesbrooke, died in 1604. His effigy is a fine example of its date, and on the side below kneel a youth in armour who predeceased his father and eight daughters.

The church has not been modernised and retains its "three decker." The font is, however, somewhat of an eyesore and sadly out of place in the middle of the church. The north transept has long disappeared, but has left conspicuous evidence of its existence on the exterior. The western tower bears on each of its four sides the arms of the Butvileyns who were lords of Cottesbrooke from the time of Henry II. to that of Edward IV.

So away northwards through gate after gate to the summit of Haselbech Hill, whence on a clear day an extensive view may be obtained, and even through to-day's haze I can descry Brixworth spire far away to the south. I am now in the heart of the

Pytchley country, but the foxes are now sleeping their summer sleep in the heart of the thick foliaged spinneys, and the sheep are nibbling the sweet upland pastures which but six months since re-echoed to the huntsman's horn.[1]

A sharp turn to the left after passing Haselbech church brings me at last to Naseby, with the exception of its appropriately named neighbour, Cold Ashby, the highest village in the county, but in spite of this there is no view to be obtained without

Naseby.

climbing the church steeple, an adventure for which I am not inclined after my ride. It is a pleasure to lay the fine spire to the credit of the most remorseless period of the last century, when the church underwent restoration. The story of its predecessor is worth relating.

It is said that an early settlement of the foundations of the tower warned the original builders that it would not be safe to erect a spire upon it, and Samuel Ireland's sketch at the end of

[1] A former rector of Haselbech informs me that at certain seasons a dense fog settles down upon these uplands, and continues for weeks without dispersing.

the eighteenth century shows a low crocketed pyramid surmounted by a ball and cross, in humble imitation of St. Paul's. This ball, popularly known as "Naseby Old Man," was a huge sphere of copper capable of containing no less than sixty gallons, which, like the capacious breeches of Sir Hudibras, "had been at the siege of Bullen."[1] Thence it was carried away by one Sir Giles Allington, Master of the Ordnance to Henry VIII., and set up in triumph on the summit of his Cambridgeshire mansion. At last, after filling this honourable position for more than two hundred years, on the demolition of the Allington mansion it was purchased by a Naseby magnate and fixed in the position it occupied till the restoration of 1860.[2] A careful search would probably discover it as sound as ever in the corner of some Northamptonshire parterre.

Ireland's sketch also shows the source of the "lucid Avon," then a poetic spring bubbling forth into a rustic basin on the village green, but now an ugly hollow concealed in a private shrubbery and disfigured by a hideous and derelict iron vase. As for the spring, when I was there in the month of August it was only to be supplied by the imagination.

A short run on the Clipston road takes us to the obelisk set up in 1823 by John and Mary Frances Fitzgerald, the parents of Carlyle's friend, to commemorate the fateful battle of June 14th, 1645. Though a mile or two away from the actual battlefield, it serves to mark the spot where the forces of the Parliament mustered on the morning of the day, and were it not almost entirely planted out by trees would serve as an historic landmark for the country round. This plantation, I may observe, is only another example of the singular custom which demands that wherever any relic of antiquarian or historic interest occurs, be it mound, entrenchment, temple, or tower, it should be

[1] In this classical similitude I find I have been anticipated by Thomas Carlyle, who seems to have visited Naseby some twenty years before the rebuilding of the steeple.

[2] It was then given to the said magnate's descendant, and at the sale of his effects in 1888 it was bought for £5 by W. J. Buswell, of Market Harborough.

rendered as insignificant and unmeaning as possible, by planting it out, as here, with trees.[1]

But on the morning of the "glorious day of June" in 1645 there was nothing to obstruct the view of the dancing banners and shining cuirasses of the Royalist host as it drew up on the high ground between East Farndon and Oxendon three or four miles away, and the soldiers of the Parliament had already advanced down the hill to meet it when the prudent intervention of Cromwell, the hero of the day, called them back to a more advantageous position. But first it will be well to explain how it came about that the collision between the opposing armies took place on the lower ground that separates the heights of Naseby and Sibbertoft rather than anywhere else.

After the capture of Leicester on the last day of May, the King determined to abandon his northward march for a time in order to return to the relief of Oxford, which was hard pressed by Fairfax and the New Model. He had got as far as Daventry when the news arrived that the siege had been abandoned and that Fairfax had marched off to the assistance of the Parliamentary forces in the Eastern Counties. He accordingly concluded that he might give his men two or three days' rest while he collected supplies for the starving garrison of Oxford. Nor was there now any reason why he might not himself interpose a little ease by taking part in the ordinary pleasures of the country gentleman. So on the evening of the 12th he was riding down to hunt a buck in Fawsley Park, when he was startled by the intelligence that the enemy was close at hand. The fact was that Fairfax, who had reached the Ouse on his eastward route, hearing that the Royalists were no farther away than Daventry, resolved to bring matters to a decisive issue without delay. With this intention, he reached Kislingbury, a village about four miles from Northampton on the Daventry road, on the morning of the 12th,

[1] Witness instances at Norham, Pontefract, Ludlow, Framlingham, Beaumaris, Coyty, Caerleon, Marlborough, Oxford, Guildford, &c.

and the same night the red glow on Borough Hill, only eight miles away, showed him that the King's troops had set fire to their encampment and were in full retreat. By this time Cromwell had come up from Cambridgeshire with a troop of horse, and orders were given to move northwards in pursuit. On the evening of the 13th Commissary General Ireton surprised two parties of Rupert's Horse at Naseby, one enjoying a game of quoits and the other seated at supper, so little did they suspect that dash was a quality which might be exhibited by any other commander than their own. It is said that the table at which the latter party were taken is still preserved in the village. That night Fairfax spent at Guilsborough, and Charles at Lubenham, two miles west of Harborough, where Rupert was quartered. But neither the King nor his nephew was destined to enjoy much repose. Some troopers who had managed to make their escape from Ireton's dragoons came in with the news of the capture of their fellows, and it was clear that it was now useless for the Royalists to attempt to continue their retreat any farther to the north. So at two in the morning the King rode into Harborough to take part in a council of war, at which it was resolved to face about and prepare to receive the enemy. As already noted, the ground selected was the ridge about two miles to the south of the town, stretching from East Farndon to Oxendon.

Between this ridge and the Naseby plateau the ground is undulating, but falls gently on either side to a small stream on which the village of Clipston is situated. Riding forward through Clipston to reconnoitre (the early morning visit of the famous Cavalier and his gallant troopers must long have been the talk of the village ale-bench), Rupert descried, as he believed, the army of Fairfax in full retreat. He was, however, soon undeceived. The movement he observed was only that necessitated by the change of position undertaken by Cromwell's advice, and before long he saw the forces of the enemy drawn up in a formidable position on the summit of the plateau. A glance showed him that the steep, broken slopes in front of them were

fatal to the chances of a cavalry charge, and he edged away to Dust Hill on his right, sending back word for the main army to join him there with all speed. Here the descent to Broad Moor, as the ground in the hollow between the two armies was called, was easier, the opposite ascent less steep. On his part, Fairfax made a parallel movement to the left on to the crest of Mill Hill, behind which, in order to conceal their numbers and dispositions from the enemy, they temporarily retreated. The two armies were now drawn up opposite to each other on either side of Broad Moor, that of the Parliament being almost twice as large as that of the King. It was the Royalists who made the first advance, and the fighting soon became general on the southern slope. Rupert, with his usual impetuosity, after driving back Ireton's Horse on the left of the Parliament's army, dashed on to secure the baggage train in the rear of Naseby village. The task, however, was not as easy as he had fancied. "A party of theirs," writes an eye-witness, "that broke through the left wing of horse, came quite behind the rear to our Train; the Leader of them, being a person somewhat in habit like the General [Fairfax], in a red montero, as the General had. He came as a friend; our commander of the guard of the Train went with his hat in his hand, and asked him, How the day went? thinking it had been the General: the Cavalier, who we since heard was Rupert, asked him and the rest, If they would have quarter? They cried No; gave fire and instantly beat them off. It was a happy deliverance."

"The Cavalier" would have done better to follow up his first success, for meantime the battle was proceeding most disastrously for his side. At first, indeed, in the centre of the fight the Royalist foot were gaining the advantage over the superior numbers opposed to them, but they had lost the support of the cavalry on their right, and now the prompt intervention of Cromwell decided the day. On the west of the field, at right angles to the opposing fronts, was a thick growth of coppice, still existing, known as Sulby hedges. Behind this was posted a regi-

ment of dragoons under Colonel Okey, and as Rupert galloped past they had done their best to harass him with their musketry fire. Now that the coast was clear, and the hottest struggle was in the centre of the field, they sallied forth from their concealment and assailed the rear and right of the Royalist infantry. These unfortunate troops, most of them Welshmen, were now surrounded on all sides, for Cromwell, recognising that victory would lie with whichever side could bring a squadron of horse to bear upon the seething mass of foot soldiers, first of all drove from the field Langdale's Horse on the Royalist left, which was toiling up the slope to confront him, and then dashed in upon Sir Jacob Astley's doomed infantry in the centre. Rupert was now seen riding back from his useless attempt upon the baggage wagons, but it was too late, the day was irretrievably lost, and he passed by without striking a blow. The King indeed, with characteristic bravery, was on the point of bringing up his reserve for a last attempt, but as he rode forward a Scottish nobleman, the Earl of Carnwath, seized his bridle, crying, "Will you go upon your death in an instant?" Almost at the same moment there was a shout "March to the right," and the whole body of the Royalists turned and fled. "We pursued the Enemy," wrote Cromwell the same evening, "from three miles short of Harborough to nine beyond, even to the sight of Leicester, whither the King fled." One party of the fugitives was overtaken in a deep ravine near Sibbertoft called Hellecombe, another, as already noticed, was cut to pieces in the churchyard at Marston Trussell, where their bones have in these later days been discovered.[1]

[1] In telling the story of the battle I have followed the guidance of Dr. S. R. Gardiner. Unlike Edgehill, when the war was a novelty, and made a deep impression on the minds of the countryfolk, Naseby seems to have preserved hardly any traditions of its battle, but the following note written by the late Rev. N. Simpkinson, at one time rector of Great Brington, was communicated to *The Standard* in 1906 by Mr. A. L. Y. Morley of that place.

"In the summer of 1865 I rode over from Brington (of which I was rector) to Naseby, and while I was examining the field I fell

And now, according to all orthodox principles, I ought to descend to Broad Moor and see the field of battle for myself. There you may still see Sulby hedges, and the hollows where the ground has sunk, marking the graves in which the slain were buried.[1] On the rising ground to the north you may see the spot where the King's army was drawn up on the morning of the fateful day, and to the south, the slopes up which Rupert of the Rhine made his furious charge, and down which, later in the day, Cromwell and his Ironsides came thundering down upon "the ranks of the Accurst,"—all this and more the twentieth century traveller may explore, but the afternoon draws on and, sad to say, I shirk my obvious duty, and turning my face homewards reach the Harborough road with five miles still to traverse before I get back to the "Coach and Horses." At Lamport a cheerful-looking inn bespeaks a rest; according to

in with an old labourer of more than eighty years of age, who showed me various spots where the battle had been hottest, as was evident by the bullets and fragments of weapons which are still turned up occasionally by the plough. He told also an anecdote of the battle day which he had heard from his grandfather when sitting on his knee as a little boy, and which that grandfather had similarly heard from the person to whom the incident happened, just 220 years before.

"The story was this: The subject of the incident, being then a child of about four years old, was standing at his cottage door on the morning of the battle, when Cromwell's troopers came riding through the village. The cottage was on the south side of the churchyard, in a narrow part of the village, a high wall at that time separating the churchyard from the road. The little boy, seeing the horses, ran across the road in front of them, as children will (how much like the terrors to motor cars in the twentieth century!—A. L. Y. M.); the foremost trooper, fearing that the child would certainly be killed, stooped from his saddle, caught the boy by the nape of his neck, and flung him over the wall on his right. The child happily fell on soft ground in the churchyard with no injury done to him, and lived to tell the story as above."

[1] About 700 in the actual battle and 300 in the pursuit, says Dr. Gardiner. The numbers engaged were 14,000 on the victorious, and 7,500 on the defeated side.

precedent its sign should be the "Isham Arms," but whether this is so or not I forget. At any rate, Lamport Hall is just across the road, and by turning up a lane which leads to the rather uninteresting church a glimpse of the house may be obtained. The gardens contain a curious rock garden, a hobby of the late baronet, where at every turn the visitor is confronted by pigmy figures in lifelike attitudes, peeping up from their underground haunts, or intent upon their daily labours, wielding their pickaxes, and trundling their laden barrows.

The Ishams have been one of the leading families of the county for at least four centuries, and the founder of the present family, a scion of a Pytchley stock long extinct at that place, settled here early in the reign of Elizabeth. This John Isham, like the ancestors of the Heathcotes and the Langhams, made his fortune as a London merchant. He was three times Warden of the Mercers' Company and a hospitable warden too, for "it being the custom for the Wardens to entertain their brethren of the Company at their feast at St. James' tide, and to procure from their friends what venison they could to make them good chear, he had bestowed on him no less than thirty fat and large bucks, whom he shewed to divers of his Company, to their no small admiration, lying all together in the gallery of his house." [1] Warden John's grandson, another John, was the first baronet, and it was through his marriage with the daughter of a Kentish lawyer that the the Christian name, Justinian, a name already borne by six out of eleven baronets, found its way into the family. For it so happened that this lady, Judith Lewin by name, had a brother whom his father, with the reverence for legal learning appropriate to a Doctor of Laws and "Official-Principal of the Arches," had named after the writer of the Pandects, and her son duly named after his uncle became the first Sir Justinian Isham.

The Isham family seems to have had an hereditary predilection for letters. Thus this first Justinian (d. 1674) was well

[1] MS. at Lamport printed by Wotton, *Baronetage*.

known among his contemporaries as a Latinist. "The Emperor Justinian," as Dorothy Osborne disrespectfully terms him in her private correspondence, was "the vainest, impertinent, self-conceited, learned coxcomb that ever yet I saw. Lord! what would I give that I had a Latin letter of his for you, that he writ to a great friend at Oxford, where he gives him a long and learned character of me; 'twould serve you to laugh at this seven year." He was, in fact, after the death of his first wife, one of the suitors for the hand of this lively lady, but, as readers of her letters will understand, without any chance of success. Formal and pompous we may well believe that he was, especially in the eyes of a young girl who had already made the choice of her heart, yet he had another side to his character, and one that doubtless appealed to his "great friend at Oxford." For this we must go to the long Latin inscription in Lamport church; here he is "optimis disciplinis atque artibus domi forisque instructus et excellenti ingenio, eruditione, eloquentia, prudentia omnique virtute cumulatus"; he had a care for the education of his daughters—one of them "Mathematices et Algebrae imprimis supra sexum (this was before the days of Girton and Somerville) et annos ad miraculum perita," another "Latinis literis a Patre erudita." It is sad to have to record that neither of these learned ladies lived long to enjoy the fruits of their studies.

His son, the second Justinian (d. 1730), walked in the footsteps of his father: "erat Literis, si quis alius eleganter eruditus; Classicos inter Authores quibuscum crebro est versatus, Familiares habuit Horatium et Ciceronem. Ac multos ante obitum annos in sacris Oraculis Librisque Theologicis evolvendis unice intentus." But in spite of—or shall we say in consequence of—his studies, he found time to take an active part in public affairs. At the Revolution he was one of the county gentlemen who repaired to Nottingham to form a bodyguard for the Princess Anne under the command of the militant Bishop of London, and during the greater part of his life he represented either the borough or the county of Northampton in Parliament.

To carry on the story one generation farther, the third Justinian (d. 1737), one of whose brothers was Fellow of All Souls and another Rector of Lincoln, "was a Gentleman of great skill in heraldry and antiquity, a lover of letters, and well versed in several languages; he made great improvements to his seat at Lamport, and particularly in building there a fair and costly library."

The reader will begin to think that he has had enough family history for the present, but the chapter must not conclude without mention of an event which made the names of Lamport and Isham famous throughout the literary world. It was in the year 1867 that Sir Charles Isham (d. 1903) commissioned Mr. Charles Edmonds, of the firm of Sotheran, to arrange and report upon his library. Mr. Edmonds accordingly came down to Lamport and, after completing his examination of the books in the main library, proceeded to another room at the top of the house, to which a number of the apparently less valuable books had been relegated, a removal rendered necessary by the additions to the collection made by the fourth Justinian (d. 1818). Here among books of little or no importance he came upon a small parchment covered volume, which he saw at a glance was one of the greatest treasures of the whole collection, and which was in fact the greatest literary "find" of the day. Its contents were "Venus and Adonis" 1599, an edition hitherto unknown,[1] "The Passionate Pilgrim" 1599, the only other copy of this edition in existence being in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, and an unknown edition of Davies and Marlowe's "Epigrams." It has been suggested that the presence of these Elizabethan volumes at Lamport may be due to the relationship between the Ishams and the Barkers, who were the Queen's Printers, John Isham, the Warden of the Mercers, already mentioned, having married Nicholas Barker's daughter; and what is more natural than that their son Thomas Isham (d. 1605) should have kept up his intimacy with his mother's family?

[1] 1st ed. 1593, 2nd 1594, 3rd 1596; this is therefore the 4th.

Thus he would enjoy special facilities for acquiring copies of the most fashionable books of the day.

So home without dismounting at Hanging Houghton, where the guide-books say the Montagus once had a house, though why "Hanging" one would like to know. Nothing further of interest is passed except the Brixworth ironstone quarries, which, like those at Islip, are extensive, before I reach the "Coach and Horses" and the end of my day's journey.

CHAPTER XII

KETTERING—WEEKLEY—GEDDINGTON—BOUGHTON—RUSHTON—ROTHWELL

In the very centre of the county about the upper waters of the slender Ise lies an undulating and well-wooded district including the last outliers of the great forest which once stretched down close to Northampton itself. Unrelated to the forest are great avenues of elm which here extend for miles in all directions. They date but from the eighteenth century, and are the work of "Planter John," the second Duke of Montagu, whose acquaintance we shall presently make.

At Geddington, in the heart of this umbrageous region, the Ise, which has hitherto maintained an eastern course, bends abruptly to the south, and after flowing through Boughton Park leaves Kettering a mile to the right in its onward course to join the Nene at Wellingborough. Here at Kettering the traveller may if he pleases take up his abode, though in this thriving home of the shoe industry he will hardly find much to interest him. In any case, he will be sure to visit the church and the fine collection of pictures bequeathed to his native town by the late Alfred East.

The church is in the main Perpendicular, though, as its east window shows, the chancel is of Geometrical date. The leading feature is the magnificent steeple which faces the visitor as he enters the town from the railway station. The two lower stages of the west front are occupied by a richly ornamented doorway surmounted by a very lofty transomed window of five lights; the third stage containing the clock face is panelled, and the fourth has one of those fine three-light

belfry windows of which we have already seen so many, each light being subdivided into two smaller ones with transoms. The parapet is slightly overset, and at the corners are four octagonal turrets, such as we saw at Oundle, and shall see again later on at Byfield.[1] The beautiful crocketed spire with its three tiers of lights has been already mentioned.[2] The curious slant of the large north porch enables it to face the entrance to the churchyard from the market-place.

It is an easy run from Kettering through Weekley to Geddington with its famous Eleanor Cross, one of the three still surviving. Weekley is a pretty village with an interesting church and many substantial comfortable-looking houses, for the well-to-do Kettering man of business has evidently found his home here. On my way to the church I pass a noteworthy seventeenth century house on the left, a hospital for old men founded in 1614 by Sir Edward Montagu. Like the founders of the similar institutions at Liddington and Higham, he provided that his almsmen should be waited on by ministering women. The compartment of the front in which the door is set rises above the eaves and forms a dormer terminating in the curved gable of the period and flanked by miniature obelisks. Above the door is the founder's motto, "What thov doest do yt in fayth," and beneath the modern mural sundial Ovid's trite but unimpeachable warning to humanity :

Tempora labuntur, tacitisque senescimus annis.

Hard by is another fine old house of the same period, recently restored. The church, a few yards farther on, is mainly of the Decorated period, but has earlier as well as later features—note the Norman doorway and the square-headed piscina in the north chapel with its curious early carvings. The spire, which appears to be rather short for the tower, has two tiers of gabled lights. But what will prove most attractive to the ordinary visitor will be the monuments of the earlier Montagus. (The later members of the family are interred at Warkton, the

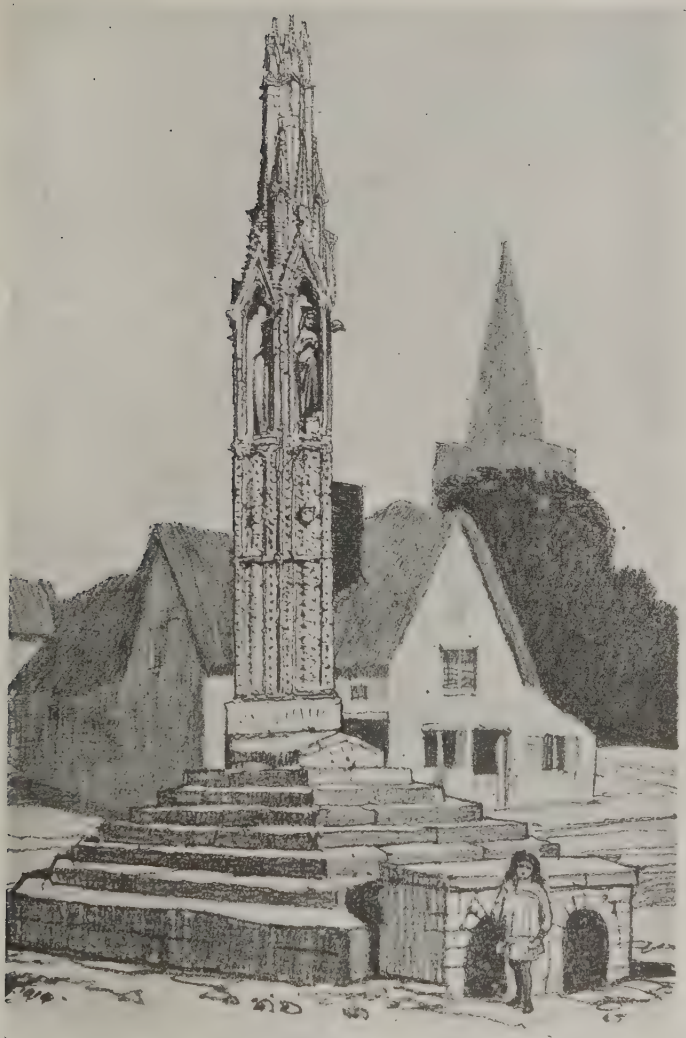
[1] Pp. 322. [2] P. 57.

Kettering Church.

next village to the south-east.) Three of them must be mentioned: the very fine alabaster figure on the table tomb in the north chapel is that of Lord Chief Justice Montagu (d. 1557), the purchaser of the Boughton estates and the founder of this branch of the family. He is clean-shaven and wears his coif and cap of office, whereas his son, who lies near him (Sir Edward, d. 1602), has a peaked beard and is clad in armour and a ruff. Opposite is the mural monument of the third Sir Edward (d. 1644), the founder of the hospital, and created in 1621 Baron Montagu of Boughton.

After quitting Weekley the road skirts Boughton Park and gives the cyclist a distant view of the long façade of the house, of which we shall have more to say presently. At present the beautiful approach to Geddington absorbs all our attention. The Ise is here spanned by a charming mediæval bridge, which with the water meadows on either side of the stream, backed by groups of poplars and old gabled houses, forms a delightful picture. Once over the bridge we are soon in the village square and contemplating the Cross. It is quite different in design from the Northampton or Hardingstone Cross, for the shaft is triangular and covered with diaper work, and the figures of the Queen in the three canopied niches have a veil on the head instead of the unveiled hair flowing over the shoulders. The whole structure is raised upon seven steps, and in spite of its great age and its exposed position is still perfect from base to summit. Mr. Prior tells us that the figures both here and at Hardingstone, though professing to be portraits of the Queen, are all modelled on the "Madonna" motive, and that while these at Geddington are worked in "the Peterborough style," the sculptor of the others was "William of Ireland, a mason-carver of London."

To the west of the square rises the late fourteenth century steeple of the church, some four hundred years later than the earliest remaining portions of the building. But to see these we must enter the church and take our stand in the north aisle. There above the Norman arcade is a row of triangular-headed



Geddington Cross.

recesses belonging to the arcading on the surface of the external wall of the original pre-Conquest church, and resembling the straight sided arches on the tower at Earl's Barton. In the twelfth century this wall was cut through to give the church a north aisle. It will be noticed that the arches on this side are round, while those on the south side are Early English, showing that the openings in the south wall were not cut till about a century later; a few similar recesses are to be seen on this side also. Other additions included a lengthening of the chancel eastwards, a clerestory, and a south chapel. Round the bottom of the chancel walls in the eastern bay, but before the restoration of 1857 *in situ* as front stones of the altar steps, is a Latin inscription recording the fact that the altar steps were made by William Glover of Geddington "Capellanus," who died in 1369, while a similar inscription round the altar step of the south chapel records that Robert Launcelyn of Geddington made that "cancellum" (railed in space). What William Glover's chaplaincy exactly was is not clear; was he a chantry priest, or a priest attached to the royal manor which existed here, and perhaps led to the village being selected as one of the resting places for the body of Queen Eleanor? The handsome Jacobean screen now at the west end of the south chapel was given to the church in 1618 by Maurice Tresham of Rushton. Before quitting the church we may notice near the western respond of the north arcade a doggerel inscription to one Richard Best of the Haberdashers' Company (d. 1629), the following lines of which will probably be considered more than enough:

Fovrty years he abroad did toyle
The rest he spent in his own soyle
Free from wedlock care or strife
Hee wedded was to single life.

If we turn up behind the church to the right we shall enter a woodland and elevated track far from human habitations and commanding extensive views across the valley to Harper's Brook and even to the distant Nene. A walk of four miles

through these woods and fields would take us to Brigstock, but to-day we must be satisfied with a stroll amid Planter John's avenues, down some of which we may catch a far-off glimpse of Boughton House. The district threaded by these avenues is said to measure six miles by five, and if they had been placed end to end it has been calculated that they would have stretched to a length of 72 miles. They have now stood for the

Boughton House.

best part of two centuries and are still flourishing exceedingly.

"Planter John" was the second and last Duke of Montagu of the first creation. He succeeded his father in 1709 and died in 1749. He seems to have been a man of ability, but with a taste for practical jokes, worthy, as his mother-in-law, Sarah Duchess of Marlborough, remarked, of a boy of fifteen. His granddaughter, Elizabeth, married the third Duke of Buccleuch, and carried Boughton and other Montagu estates into that

family. He made no great figure in public life (Lord Hervey sneers at him as "a man of little more consequence than his being a Duke"), but round about Boughton traditions of Planter John's eccentricities long survived. He delighted in doing unexpected acts of kindness, declaring that it was the surprise exhibited by the recipient of his favours which was his principal inducement; but he seems to have been a man of genuine kindliness, and even set apart a corner of his park for disabled or decrepit animals, which he called his "reservoir." None of his tenants dared to kill a broken-winded horse, and he used to get hold of the ugliest dogs he could find, because no one else would be kind to them. The following anecdote appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* a few years after his death:

His attention was once attracted by a middle-aged man in a tarnished uniform who used to walk at a certain hour every morning in St. James's Park "with a kind of mournful solemnity," or sit ruminating on one of the benches. He caused inquiries to be made and discovered that the object of his curiosity was an officer who had spent the whole of his money on the purchase of a commission, and had served with the utmost gallantry in the continental war, but was now starving on half-pay. His wife and children he had sent down to Yorkshire from motives of economy, and regularly transmitted to them half of his allowance. Here was a chance for one of Planter John's agreeable surprises. He accordingly made his arrangements, and then watching his opportunity when the officer was sitting as usual on a bench in the Park, he sent his "gentleman" up to him with an invitation to dine at Montagu House the next day. The poor man was thunderstruck at receiving an invitation to dine with a Duke, but at last he consented, and made his appearance at the appointed hour. The Duke gave him a cordial welcome, and with a mysterious air told him that he had asked him to dinner in order to introduce him to a lady who had long had a peculiar regard for him and had expressed a great desire to meet him. The officer could not help manifesting some suspicion that he was being made a jest of, but the Duke laid his hand on his

heart and protested that he had told him nothing that he did not believe to be true. Dinner was now announced, and what was our friend's astonishment on entering the dining-room to see his wife and children seated at the table! The plot was now out, but more was to come. After dinner the Duke's solicitor was introduced and a deed already executed in due form received the ducal signature. This document settled "a genteel sufficiency for life" upon the worthy officer and his family. All protestations and expressions of gratitude on the part of the beneficiaries were silenced by his Grace with the words, "I assure you it is the last thing I would have done, if I had thought I could have employed my money or my time more to my satisfaction in any other way."

The house was built in the French manner by Planter John's father, Ralph the Magnificent, for the last four years of his life Duke of Montagu, who had been Ambassador at the Court of Louis XIV. under Charles II. Duke Ralph was also the builder, in the same style, of Montagu House, on the site of which the British Museum now stands, but apart from his magnificence his virtues do not appear to have been conspicuous, unless a steady eye to his own advancement may be reckoned among them; indeed Swift, in his caustic estimate of the characters of Queen Anne's Court, styles him "as arrant a knave as any in his time." He included within his large new building at Boughton portions—notably the hall on the west side—of the Tudor mansion erected by his ancestor, Chief Justice Montagu, whose monument we have seen at Weekley. Further additions were made by his son, but Boughton's chief claim to fame at the present day is the fact that it is an almost unaltered example of the country house of a great nobleman of the time of William III., for the furniture and decorations have in the main been allowed to remain as they were left by Duke Ralph. The gardens and grounds were famous in their day, and in the park you may still see remains of an unusually large and elaborate "lay-out"—canals, ponds, statuary, etc.

These Geddington woods amid which we are now wandering were severed from the forest and sold to the Montagus "with permission to convert them into a Chase" by Charles II. The change can hardly have been unreservedly popular, for "unlawful hunting" had long been a favourite amusement of certain of the inhabitants of Geddington and the neighbouring villages. Mr. Wise found a curious case among the Rockingham Papers, which shows that even the country parson did not disdain to take a part in these diversions, and the story is well worth retelling.

It appears that on a certain August morning in the year 1585 a black mare, saddled and bridled, was found by the keepers in Pipewell Closes—a circumstance sufficiently suspicious in itself. Inquiries were made and the animal was found to be the property of one Thomas Sargent of Geddington, who was accordingly brought up before Sir Edward Watson (d. 1617), a verderer and a justice of the peace. Called upon to explain the presence of his mare in the forest without its rider, Sargent deposed that on Sunday morning the 8th of August he had been requested to carry the wife of a neighbour to Rushton. He took the lady on a pillion behind him, and leaving the mare in "a close" at Rushton for her to ride home upon, set out himself in the evening to walk back to Geddington, and reached his house at 9 o'clock. He then went straightway to bed "and there contynued until the sonne ryseinge of the nexte Daie." It was this very "nexte Daie" that the mare was found in the Pipewell Closes, and Master Sargent's story clearly failed to explain the fact. "Beinge Examyned how his mare came into the fforeste brydled and sadeled and who ride upon her this Examynate cannot tell nether yet Dothe he remember that he mete eny betwene Rushton and Geddington nor that eny saw him at his Dep'ture from Rushton nether yet at his comeinge into Geddington, and more than this he cannot saie." The weakness of this story is so palpable that we are surprised to hear that "this Examynate" was set at liberty on the strength of it. His reprieve was, however, a short one, for he was shortly after-

wards rearrested and again brought before the magistrate. This time he seems to have realised that further fabrications would only make matters worse, and that his best course was to tell the plain truth. His account of the affair presents such a lively picture of the country life of the day that it must be given in the words of the original deposition :

" This Examynate upon his reexamynacon saiethe that of Sondaye being the viiith daye of August he was at Russheton at Sr Thomas Treshams howse wheare he dyned and Supped, and after Supper at the Requeste of Mr. hutton the Parson of Russheton aforesaid he went to the same p'sons Chamber, and took upp his Mare aboute Mydnighte, and rode with the same Parson accompanyed with one Willm Burbage of Rothwell, and a man of on [one] Thomas Treshams of Gedington nowe remayninge in the howse of Sr Thomas Tresham at Russheton whose name he knoweth not to a Reekplace [rick-yard ?] in Pypwell Closes where they all lighted and left there horses without any body wth them, and from thence they went all together wth a brace of Grayhoundes ledde by the said Mr. Treshams man (the one a blacke and the other a dune) into the Launde of Benyfeilde wheare the Dogges were letten slypp and at the ffirste Course they Kylled a Buck or a Sore, at wch Course they loste one of there Grayhoundes, and yet notwithstanding they coursed agayne wth the odde Dogge and kylled an other Buck or another male Deere. Whiche done this Examynate and Mr. Tresham's man carryed the one and the Parson and Burbage carryed the other to the Sheepe Penne wheare they thoughte to have founde their horses, but from thence they were taken, whereupon they carryed the said Deere to a Barne in the Easte graunge in Pipwell and shaked a little heye upon them. And so this Examynate parted from their companye, and went home to his howse at Geddington. Synce wch tyme he sawe not any of his said Company but the Parson, who at the ffirste badde hym not to confesse anythinge, but when he harde his mare was taken upp by the kepers he tolde the Parson thereof who then badde hym

doe what he wolde hym selfe, and more than this he cannot saie."

One would like to know what punishment was meted out to Master Sargent, and also how Parson Hutton and one Willm Burbage came out of the adventure, but, unfortunately, history is silent on both points.

If the visitor can find a lodging in Geddington for the night, he may well devote the next day to an excursion to Rushton and Rothwell (locally pronounced *Rowell*). A mile out of Geddington we pass by Newton-in-the-Willows, a small village where a branch of the Treshams had a house, of which the only relic is a very fine dovecot or "dovehus," as they are called in these parts, near the church. The place obtained some notoriety in connection with the old disputes between landowner and occupier about the inclosing of the common fields. Inclosures in various parts of England had been rife for more than a century, but it was in the time of James I. that the trouble came to a head in this district. Troops of aggrieved farmers and labourers, known as "levellers," because they levelled the obnoxious fences, had assembled under the leadership of one John Reynoldes, styled by them Captain Pouch, because he wore by his side a large pouch or wallet, in which he declared there was enough [money ?] to defend his followers against all comers. His promises, however, seem to have been as worthless as those of most demagogues of his type, for at Newton he was met by a body of mounted gentlemen and their servants, and some fifty of his men were slain. As for the mysterious pouch, nothing was found in it but a piece of green cheese. This fracas led to a commission of inquiry, but like the augurs of old time the landowners discovered some informality in the terms of its appointment and nothing was done.

So westwards up the valley of the Ise and under two branches of the Midland Railway to Rushton. Of the two churches which formerly existed here St. Peter's was pulled down in 1789, and its survivor, All Saints', does duty for both parishes. The nave dates from the twelfth century, and its deeply splayed

west window now opens into the tower, which was added, together with a north aisle and north chapel, in the thirteenth century. To the fourteenth probably belongs the small vestry on the south side with a pointed barrel vault. Between chancel and north chapel is a wonderful Tresham monument (moved here from St. Peter's, which stood near the Hall). It is the only one of its kind in England, and the recumbent effigy represents Sir Thomas Tresham (d. 1559), last Lord Prior of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. He wears the mantle of the Order over his armour, and a very noticeable and unusual feature is the peaked beard raised above the neck instead of resting upon it. There is another much older monument in the north chapel—a knight in Purbeck marble said to represent Sir William de Goldingham, who died in 1296. The chancel has evidently been shortened at some time, and the richly carved sedilia with projecting heads, two rams' heads and one human, have suffered in consequence.

Rushton Hall, for nearly two centuries before Gunpowder Plot the seat of the Treshams, and for two centuries after it of the Cockaynes, is pleasantly situated on the Ise, which runs through the Park. The house, late sixteenth and early seventeenth century work with modern alterations and additions, resembles Castle Ashby in so far as it is built round three sides of a quadrangle, and has a screen on the fourth (here the east) side. The late sixteenth century portions are the work of Sir Thomas Tresham, "The Builder," who is already familiar to us in connection with his unfinished house, "The New Bield," at Lyveden.[1] The two other famous works of his, the Triangular Lodge at Rushton and the Market House at Rothwell, we are now going to visit.

The Triangular Lodge stands in a shrubbery at the north end of the Park and at a rather higher elevation than the house. The initials and dates it bears on its exterior show that it was erected in 1593–1595. Artistically it is of no interest. There is something repellent and exasperating about a three-sided

[1] P. 96.

habitation, as anyone who has been at the pains to inspect Sir Thomas's three floors may see for himself, nor has he mended matters by the screens which he has run across the corners, thereby converting a trigon into a hexagon. However, it was not any practical or utilitarian motive that inspired Sir Thomas during one of his long imprisonments to elaborate this design. His thoughts were soaring far above all merely mundane concerns when he conceived this symbolical presentation of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. All due respect to Sir Thomas, his design was doubtless the offspring of a sincere and reverent soul; nevertheless the result is what would now be remorselessly termed a freak, and in freaks I cannot pretend to be interested. The spectator will observe that everything, sides, gables, floors, windows, pinnacles, is in threes—a curiosity of architecture, indeed, but for further discussion I must refer the reader to Mr. Gotch's book, already mentioned, or to the chapter on Sir Thomas Tresham in Miss Dryden's *Memorials of Old Northamptonshire*. For ourselves, we must cross the Ise and bear away to the right to Rothwell, where the church is one of the most interesting in the county.

But first for Sir Thomas's Market House—the only one of the three adapted solely for practical purposes, for although according to his original design, a record of which has been preserved, he had intended to invest it with some mystical significance, in the actual execution no symbolic features were introduced. But for a curious accident we might indeed have remained in ignorance of this purpose of Sir Thomas.

In the course of some repairs which were being carried out at Rushton Hall in 1832 a secret recess in the wall above one of the doorways was discovered containing a small collection of books and manuscripts. Among the latter was an agreement made by Sir Thomas with a local mason for the erection of the Market House, for in this instance no intermediary in the shape of an architect was employed. This agreement was dated July 2nd, 1578, and provided for the erection of the mystic number of seven gables, seven arches, and seven windows; the result

would probably have been an anticipation of the extravagances of the Triangular Lodge, but the practical genius of the mason won the day, and the building as actually carried out shows the balanced proportions of eight arches and six windows. As for the gables, the work never got so far, for, like Lyveden, it was left unfinished, and unfinished it remained till it was taken in hand about twenty years ago, and successfully brought to a conclusion to serve for public offices.[1] The arches of the ground floor, formerly open to provide a market shelter, have been closed, and the room thus formed is used as offices by the local authorities, while the upper floor serves as a Public Library. The whole in its general outline recalls the New Bield on a smaller scale, at any rate as far as the windows, cornices, and ground plan are concerned. Sir Thomas decorated the cornice with the shields of the principal Northamptonshire families of the day, and running round the central band dividing the two stages he put the inscription:

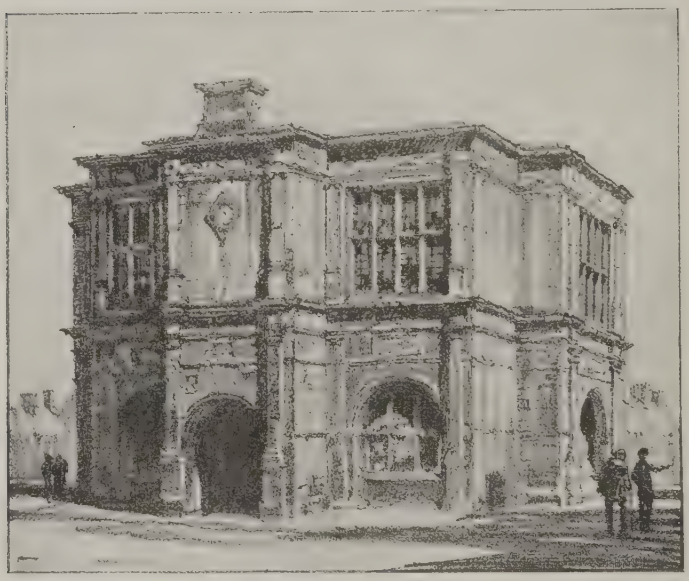
THOME TRESAMI MILITIS FUIT HOC OPUS IN GRATIAM DULCIS PATRIAE FECIT SUAE TRIBUSQUE NORTHAMPTONIAE VEL MAXIME HUJUSQUE VICINI SIBI PAGI. NIHIL PRAETER BONUM COMMUNE QUAESIVIT NIHIL PRAETER DECUS PERENNE AMICORUM. MALE QUI INTERPRETATUR DIGNUS HAUD TANTO EST BONO. AO. DOMINI MILLESIMO QUINGENTESIMO SEPTUAGESIMO SEPTIMO.

Rothwell, once a town of some importance—witness the stately proportions of its church—has been saved from oblivion by its boot and shoe trade, to say nothing of its clothing factory, and the visitor will not do amiss if he now devotes an hour to rest and refreshment, of which he will doubtless feel the need if he has made an early start, and has loitered upon the journey as much as I have endeavoured to persuade him to do. Nor will he have to go far from the Market House before he will light upon one of those hostelries at which the traveller in every line of business (archæology not excepted) finds meat for horse and man. To-day, however, no other gentlemen of the road are in evidence—no farmers, no market people of any kind,

[1] The work was directed by Mr. J. Alfred Gotch.

and I am disposed to doubt whether any market still survives. It is said, however, that the annual Fair, renowned through seven centuries, and held in Trinity week, the week of the Feast, for the church is dedicated to the Holy Trinity, is still kept.

The church is situated within a stone's throw of the Market House, and there is nothing very remarkable about its exterior,



Rothwell Town Hall.

but we have hardly passed through the doors when we see that the building is one of quite exceptional interest. Its most striking characteristics at first sight are its spaciousness and height, and yet it was once even larger still. It now consists of western tower, nave, chancel, and aisles, but it has seen the day when it also had transepts and probably a central tower. At present the length, including the western tower, is about 170 feet and the width about 60 feet. The north aisle is as wide as the nave, and the south aisle even wider, but while the

former is prolonged eastwards as far as the sanctuary, the latter does not now extend beyond the choir stalls. And now for its history.

To put it briefly, what we see to-day is a Transitional and Early English rebuilding, with later additions and alterations, of an original cruciform Norman church. To this church the lower range of windows on the south side of the chancel probably belongs. From the masonry of the lower portions of the western tower and the character of many of the capitals of the arcades it would appear that the rebuilding began about 1170

Rothwell Church.

and was continued well into the following century. In this condition the church seems to have remained for four or five decades, but the enterprising spirit of the thirteenth century made itself felt in Northamptonshire as it did in most other parts of England, and by the middle of the century the energetic parishioners of Rothwell had determined that their church should be still further enlarged. They set to work, therefore, to lengthen the chancel, widen the aisles, and heighten the nave. Exactly what device was employed to secure the last of these objects is a debatable point, but it will be noticed that while the upper portion of the piers has a filleted shaft on each face, the lower portion is without the fillet and is merely a prop or stilt. On these props apparently the original piers and arches

have been rebuilt, thus doubling the height of both. These heightened arcades would, of course, carry the high pitched roof, of which the weathering may be seen on the east face of the tower. At this time, too, the central tower may have become unsafe and been removed. Finally, with the Perpendicular period came the usual clerestories and lowered roofs, as well as the belfry stage of the western tower.

Not only a belfry, however, but also a spire, for in the seventeenth century it is recorded that a disaster took place. In the year 1657 the spire and part of the tower fell and, according to Bridges, "beat down six bays of the church." Exactly what the damage was and how far it extended it is impossible to say, but it is clear that some part of the masonry we now see must be due to the repairs then rendered necessary. What is certainly known is that in 1673 the transepts, ruinous perhaps and not considered to be of any utility, were pulled down.

In the eighteenth century it seemed that the chancel would go the way of the transepts; at any rate, it had become more or less dilapidated, and was screened off from the nave by a plaster and glass partition. One redeeming feature of this period, however, still remains in the fine brass chandelier inscribed "Mr. Bryan Hull of Rushton Donor 1733."

The church was appropriate to Ciceter (Cirencester) Abbey, Gloucestershire, from the time of Henry I. to the Dissolution, and the perpetual vicarage was ordained in 1220 under the Bishop of Lincoln of the day, Hugh Wells. Inside the altar rails is the brass of the first vicar (d. 1361), William of Rothwell, afterwards Archdeacon of Essex. Two other brasses deserve notice, that of Edward Saunders (d. 1513) and Johanna his wife, founder of the chantry, the chapel of which is now used as a vestry, and that of Owen Ragsdale (d. 1591), a kneeling figure with a coat of arms bearing the motto, *Fecit mihi magna qui potens est*. This now hangs on the wall beside his table tomb, on which is another brass bearing together with a quotation from Isaiah his title to fame: *Hic jacet ille vir probus & pius Owinus Rages-*

dale, qui hospitium posuit Jesu: Iste accipiens benedictionem a Domino eam retribuit pauperibus suis. Then comes the date of his death. This hospital, which, with its fine old quadrangle, stands near the church, he founded for twelve old men with a master or warden. "The warden," says Bridges, "hath a gallery and he and the old men have each a separate chamber, and there are four common halls, to each hall three men"—surely a very liberal provision.

If the visitor has plenty of time at his disposal he may make a more minute inspection than I have been able to sketch for him, but in no case will he fail to visit the charnel house under the south aisle on which the local celebrity of the church chiefly rests. Although surviving examples are uncommon in this country, students of church lore are aware that when a churchyard became crowded, and space for fresh interments was required, the old bones were collected and deposited either in a subterranean vault or else in a chamber above ground adjoining the church. At Stratford-upon-Avon the latter expedient was adopted,[1] and the well-known lines engraved on Shakespeare's grave were intended to prevent any interference with it. Here it is a large vaulted subterranean chamber now reached by a flight of steps from the south porch. As Mr. Hamilton Thompson has pointed out, it must have existed before the widening of the aisle (*c.* 1250), for its outer wall is *within* and not under the present aisle wall. At what date it was last used is not known, for by the beginning of the eighteenth century its very existence had been forgotten, and it was then only accidentally discovered by the sexton when engaged in digging a grave in the south aisle. The bones were long piled round the walls, but about three years ago they were repiled in the centre of the chamber, forming

[1] This charnel-house at Stratford was taken down about the year 1800, and the bones it contained were buried. It was of two storeys, the lower containing the bones vaulted over and partly below the surface, the upper a room conjectured to have been a sleeping room for the choristers attached to the College.

a huge stack round which the visitor can walk. It was then calculated that these relics represented about 11,000 interments.

The return to Geddington may be made by way of the picturesque village of Thorpe Malsor, of which Mr. Griggs has given us a sketch, and thence through Kettering and Weekley by our former route.

Thorpe Malsor.

CHAPTER XIII

GAYTON — WEEDON BEC — STOWE NINE CHURCHES — GREAT EVERDON—NEWNHAM—DODFORD—WATFORD—GUILSBOROUGH—ASHBY ST. LEDGERS—DAVENTRY

The high road from Northampton to Daventry traverses the suburb called St. James's End, after the abbey once supreme in this quarter, and as you pass into the open country the great red building above you on the right is the County Lunatic Asylum, during the war transformed into a vast military hospital. But I shall avoid this road to-day and take the train to Blisworth by the loop which connects the main line with the Northampton and Market Harborough branch. The village, once the seat of the Wakes now of Courteenhall, two or three miles to the east, has a tempting look, but I have no time for it now, for I have to climb the hill to Gayton on my road to Weedon Bec. Gayton church is interesting, but has been severely treated by the restorer. The walls are scraped, the screen moved, and the chancel rebuilt. But to make up for this it has some noteworthy monuments, and some good Flemish glass, the best of which is in the modern window of the north chapel, which before its transformation was square with five lancets.

The fourteenth century sepulchral effigies will be duly inspected, but the attention of the Oxford visitor will be caught by two names familiar to him in his own county, Tanfield and Lockwood. For here is the tomb of Francis Tánfield (d. 1558), said to be the builder of the very beautiful manor-house which

we shall pass directly, and Bridget, his wife. It was his nephew, Lord Chief Baron Tanfield, who built the Priory House at Burford, and whose splendid monument is known to all who have ever visited that famous old Cotswold town. And here too is a huge mural tablet to the Lockwood family, but it would be too severe a tax upon the reader's patience to reproduce the inscription. Suffice it to say that in the eighteenth century Richard Lockwood quitted Gayton for Dews Hall in Essex, which has since been the home of the family, but a branch was long identified with a well-known Oxfordshire village, and that delightful volume, *Kingham Old and New*, is, as all its readers know, dedicated to the memory of one of its most notable representatives. One more memorial and we have done, but all Harrovians will regard with interest the tomb of George Butler, Headmaster of Harrow, Rector of Gayton and Dean of Peterborough.

Gayton.

The Tanfield manor-house is on our right as we leave the church. It is, perhaps, rather too thickly clothed with creepers, but its peculiar feature is still discernible, and this consists in certain thoroughly delightful projecting bays of two storeys each with a smaller attic stage above. Now bear to the left through the village and ride down the hill to the Grand Junction Canal. At the bottom you will cross one of the ancient trackways of this district, which branches off from the so-called Via Sacra about three miles north of the Rollright Stones, and

passing Tadmarton, Broughton, and Banbury continues its course to Northampton by way of Culworth, Cold Higham, and Rothersthorpe. Between Banbury and Northampton it has from time immemorial been known as Banbury Lane, and we shall meet it again before we get to the close of the volume. But our route is fast taking us to an ancient highway of far greater fame than this. We run through the villages of Bugbrooke and Nether Heyford, both of which have churches worth the attention of those with time on their hands, and at last emerge from our devious lane upon Watling Street, just a mile to south of our headquarters at Weedon Bec.

Now, as everybody knows, Weedon ever since the year 1803 has been the seat of a "Royal Military Depot"; in other words, its chief title to fame is the possession of a magazine and extensive barracks. Therefore, as we shall see presently, the stranger, at any rate in war time, will do well to walk warily, and to put himself right with the powers that be. This settled, he will find a hospitable welcome, good cuisine, and comfortable quarters with Landlord Tuck at the "Globe," and he may spend three or four days in the exploration of the surrounding country. In the village itself there is nothing to detain him, unless he is interested in aqueducts, bridges, and embankments, but its connection with St. Werburgh, a daughter of the Royal House of Mercia, and patroness of Chester Cathedral, may demand a moment's notice. A chapel dedicated to her formerly stood on the south side of the churchyard, and one of the four monasteries over which she presided (Repton was another) was situated here. She spent much of her life within its walls, and the old story tells how, when the good farmers of Weedon complained of the ravages committed upon their cornfields by the flocks of wild geese, which it seems were quite unscrupulous in those far off days, St. Werburgh called the transgressors together and banished them for ever from her precincts. And, in fact, to the chagrin doubtless of the local wildfowler, no wild geese have ever been known to molest the farmers since. The monastery

was afterwards a priory belonging to the Abbey of Bec in Normandy, and hence the place got its name of Weedon Bec, distinguishing it from Weedon Lois, which we shall get to in a later chapter.

Let our first excursion from the "Globe" begin with a village rejoicing in the ubiquitous name of Stowe—whether with or without the final e—but discriminated from all other Stows as Stowe Nine Churches. Why Nine Churches no one has ever been able to explain, and, were not etymological guesswork as futile as it is dangerous, one might be tempted to look for the adjacent Nene at the bottom of the mystic "nine."[1] It is true that an inquisition post mortem of the time of Henry VII. states that there were nine advowsons appendant to the manor, but Baker declares that this was impossible, and that the number of subordinate churches cannot have been more than two. Probably the name even at this date was as great a puzzle as it is now, but the local gossips were not to be disheartened, and as usual found a solution in diabolical agency. Eight several times on eight several sites did the pious builders attempt to lay the foundations of their church, and eight times were the stones removed during the night. A man who was persuaded to keep watch reported that the perpetrator of the mischief was "summet bigger nor a hog"—and the ninth attempt was successful. Climb the Towcester road, take the first turning to the right after crossing the railway bridge, and you are soon at Stowe Nine Churches, with the rectory on your left, the church in front of you, and the fine old manor-house to your right. The churchyard has a marvellously pleasant outlook across the green valley of the Nene to the wooded hills beyond, and the old church tower holds its own bravely against the surrounding trees.

This tower belonged to the Saxon church of which the foundations were uncovered by Sir Henry Dryden in 1860. It is

[1] St. Ninian's Church at Brougham in Westmorcland is said to be known traditionally as "Nine Kirks," but I know of no authority for bringing this northern saint as far south as Stowe Nine Churches.

a gaunt, unbuttressed figure bound with iron bands, and retaining at the angles the long and short work characteristic of its period. In fact, it must look now much as it looked nine hundred years ago, except for the window in its west face, which must have been altered at some later date. In 1895 a large stone worked with rude figures was dug up near its base, and there it still lies.

The interior, restored in the worst style of the worst period, and with a rebuilt chancel, is depressing. You will but note the narrow round-headed doorway with its tympanum at the west end, and turn your attention to the monuments.

There are three, representative of three very different ages and styles. The first, on the north side of the chancel, is the Purbeck marble effigy of Sir Gerard de L'Isle, "one of the finest of its period in the kingdom," says our chief authority, and possessing "the rare feature of closed eyes." He died in the latter half of the thirteenth century, and is clad in chain mail with a long open surcoat and a shield on the left arm. It is perhaps, at this time of day, hardly necessary to say that the crossed legs have nothing whatever to do with the Crusades, and are merely a feature in the natural life-like pose characteristic of the sculptured effigies of this period. The second, on the south side, is a beautiful example of seventeenth century art, and one of the masterpieces of Nicholas Stone. A lady, richly attired and well advanced in years, lies asleep upon a panelled tomb; the figure is of white marble, and the tomb on which it rests of that black stone known as "touch." Nicholas Stone's own memorandum respecting his commission has been copied into all the books, and may be given here once more:

> The 16th of March, 1617, I undertoke to mak a tombe for my Lady, mother to my Lord D'avers, which was all of whit marbell and touch, and I set it up at Stow of the Nine Chirches, in Northampton, some 2 year after, one allter tomb for the wich I had 220 li.

The lady, however, did not die till 1630, so that we have here another instance of the carving of a monumental effigy

in the lifetime of its original.[1] "My Lady" was Elizabeth, daughter of John Neville, Lord Latimer. She was twice married, first to Sir John Danvers of Dauntsey in Wiltshire and of this place, and secondly to Sir Edmund Carey. My Oxford readers will like to know that one of the sons of her first marriage was Henry Earl of Danby, the founder of the Physic Garden. As for Sir Edmund, he was the sixth son of the first Lord Hunsdon, and his younger brother, Robert Carey, was the Earl of Monmouth whose *Memoirs* are well known to students of his period. Dame Elizabeth Carey died in 1630 in her eighty-fourth year.

The third monument, a cenotaph of an elaborate description, commemorates Thomas Turner, President of C.C.C. Oxford 1688–1714. His commemoration here, for his mortal remains lie in his College, is not due to any interest of his in Stowe or its neighbourhood. He left a large sum to the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy, and with this the manor of Stowe was purchased by his executors in 1716. He stands in his gown on a terrestrial globe, with Religion standing on a celestial globe on his left—all very proper and characteristic of the time. The visitor may also notice a tablet to Charles Crawley, who died in 1849 in his ninety-third year after having been rector here for sixty years, and if he inquires at the rectory for the church key he will find that the rector is a Crawley still.

After another mile or two along the lane which still keeps to the high ground, we may dismount to inspect some entrenchments on our right which have been known from time immemorial as "Castle Dykes," and a castle of the mound and bailey type they evidently were. East and west of the mound is an enclosed court of moderate size, and to the north a larger one, which may have served to pasture the sheep and cattle required for the provision of the garrison. The history of this castle, however, is an absolute blank, and one can only guess that, standing as it does at the edge of the hills commanding the valleys to the north and east, the Norman invaders saw the importance

[1] Compare the Countess of Cardigan's effigy at Dene, p. 204, which was set up in her lifetime.

of the site and occupied it. In this, as it happened, they were only following in the wake of their predecessors, for a short distance to the south is the remnant of a much earlier earthwork of the rectangular form, even then perhaps too much battered down to be worth remaking.

A little further on, our road takes a sharp turn to the right and drops down through a fine old beech wood, well known to hunting folk as Everdon Stubbs, into the valley at Everdon. Great Everdon, to give it its full title, is a large, rambling village, with a fine, spacious Decorated church, which, unlike its neighbour at Stowe, has been well restored. Perhaps its most striking feature is its south doorway with its richly ornamented frame of ball flowers and four-leaved flowers. The monuments are not very considerable, but Bridges saw and copied an inscription to Henricus de Everdon clericus, d. 1333, and another to John of Snorscomb (a small hamlet in the parish), rector (d. 1335). The manor belongs to Eton College, and over the Easter sepulchre is a brass with a set of Latin hexameters commemorating Adam Robyns, a Fellow of Eton and rector of this place (d. 1613).

We are now within a couple of miles of Fawsley, which we shall pass again later on; at present, we leave it behind us, and following the windings of our well-kept lane we cross the infant Nene and emerge on the pleasant village green of Newnham. The church, built of a delightful reddish stone, stands on a bank above the road, and the processional path is carried through the lowest stage of the tower. The tower with its low spire thus stands upon a kind of porch of four arches, the easternmost opening into the church. In Baker may be seen a sketch of a cottage which stands, or stood in his time, on the bank of the lane which we are about to follow to reach the Daventry road. At the beginning of the seventeenth century it was inhabited by one Thomas Smith, and here was born his grandson, Thomas Randolph, whom we have already mentioned in connection with Blatherwick (p. 202).

Dodford, the last village we shall visit to-day, lies in a valley

on our left as we ride back to Weedon. It consists chiefly of old-world cottages and is watered by a rippling brook, which in one place covers nearly the whole of the street. The church, which stands on a knoll, with the substantial rectory house at its foot, must by no means be neglected, for it contains some of the most remarkable monuments in the county. The most ancient is the damaged wooden figure of Hawise de Keynes, who lived in the first half of the fourteenth century, and by her side in stone lies her great granddaughter Wentiliana (d. 1375). These identifications, it should be said, are conjectural, for no inscription belonging to either figure survives. Both figures wear veils, but the older one only has the wimple, or covering for the lower part of the chin and the neck. The Keynes had been large landholders in this part of the county from the Conquest downwards, and when the male line died out their estates descended by marriage to the Cressys, who flourished in the time of Henry VI. Look at the tombs beneath arches of the south arcade. The one to the west is believed to be that of Sir William de Keynes (d. 1344), second son of Hawise. The effigy is known to experts as one of the very few examples of " banded " mail, that is, the rings of the chain are set edgeways in bands sloping alternate ways, something like the rows of masonry called herring-bone. The whole tomb with its effigy is perhaps the last executed in Purbeck marble and is wonderfully well preserved. East of this is the tomb of Sir John Cressy (d. 1444). He lies " cut in alabaster," bareheaded and habited in a suit of plate armour with collar of S.S. The inscription tells us that he had held important posts in Normandy during the French war and died at Tove in Lorraine " conciliari[s] domini regis." There are other monuments to the Wyrleys and Bensons—later lords of the manor, and it may interest some visitors to know that in the seventeenth century Jane, daughter of John Wyrley of Dodford, married a Colley of Glaiston, Rutland, and became the grandmother of George II.'s poet laureate, Colley Cibber. The lanes, or streets if they may be so called, of Dodford are particularly winding and intricate,

but sooner or later you will regain the high road, which will take you past the barracks and the railway station and deposit you safely at the "Globe."

An expedition to Brington and the famous houses of Althorp and Holdenby will be to very many one of the most attractive in the county. I take the Northampton road and make my first halt at Flore, a large village with many good old stone-built houses, some of which cannot fail to attract the amateur of domestic architecture. Passing by several of these, I make my way to the very fine Early English and Decorated church which lies away to the south of the main road. The exterior is more engaging than the interior, but there are a very fine arcade of clustered piers, a Perpendicular chancel screen reached by a staircase on the north side, and two brasses (1498 and 1510). The chancel walls are scraped and pointed in the most approved fashion; on the north side is an Easter sepulchre, and on the south side behind the organ are a double piscina and a sedile. As for the nave, it is enough to say that the admiration which the arcade has evoked will hardly be extended to the clerestory, and the restoration work throughout the building is but poor.

Just beyond the village I leave the high road, and a pleasant hilly byway with fine views to the south brings me to the elevated hamlet of Little Brington, now chiefly visited for the sake of the "Washington House." This is a good plain ironstone building with a line of four windows opening on to the street. Over the door is a stone with an inscription said to refer to the loss of a child who died a day or two after its birth.

THE LORD GEVETH,
THE LORD TAKETH AWAY,
BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD.
CONSTRVCTA 1606,

and hard by a stone sundial was discovered with the Washington arms (Argent, two bars, and in chief three mullets gules) and the initials R. W.; the date is 1617. What we have to say of the Washingtons may be said later on when

we come to Sulgrave, but we may note here that these initials are no doubt those of Robert Washington, whose grave we shall see directly in Brington Church. He died in $162\frac{2}{3}$. Passing the village well with its thatched, cone-shaped roof supported by fir trunks, I continue my journey northwards, and another mile brings me to Great Brington—and the Spencers.

The man to whose ears the name Spencer is but an empty sound knows little of Northamptonshire or, indeed, of England. The family that can number one Duke, one Earl, and one Viscount, besides I know not how many branches of less renown, among its living representatives has earned a place in the history of the country which the ambition of the wealthy flock-master of the fifteenth century, who may be regarded as its founder, can never have anticipated. This was Sir John Spencer, of Wormleighton, some twenty miles away across the Warwickshire border, who acquired an estate at Althorp and died in 1522, the first of many generations to be buried in Brington Church. The church stands on high ground at the extremity of the village, Althorp Park and House lie immediately below it, and from the proper point of view, the great gateways (now isolated arches) of Holdenby House may be descried across the valley to the north-east. But of Holdenby and Sir Christopher Hatton, or of Holdenby and Charles the First, I am not going to speak, nor am I even going to descend the hill to see the famous pictures at Althorp House. I am, in fact, bound in the opposite direction, and must spend my allotted time in looking at the church and its monuments, for here is the largest assemblage of family monuments we have yet seen, and an impressive spectacle they are these ancestral Spencers, the men dressed in armour, and the ladies in handsome robes and elaborate hoods. Of Sir John Spencer the first (d. 1522) I have already spoken: "He was," says Arthur Collins, "knighted by Henry VIII. . . . was possessed of a very great estate; was a noble house-keeper; had a great reverence for the clergy; was very liberal to his poor neighbours, as also bountiful to his tenants and servants." His grandson, Sir

John the second (d. 1586), seems to have walked in his ways, for "he was a great œconomist, yet kept a plentiful table, according to the old English way, as is manifest from his last will and testament . . . wherein he orders hospitality to be kept in [his] houses at Althorp and Wormleighton by his heir . . . It also appears that he delighted in retiredness; was an encourager of industry; and so much averse to an unactive life, that though he was possessed of a great estate, he employed his thoughts on husbandry, as of most profit and advantage to his country; for at his death he had numerous flocks of sheep and other cattle in his grounds and parks of Althorp and Wormleighton." With the accession of King James to the English Throne came the first of the Spencer peerages, "the dignity of a Baron of this realm" having been conferred on Sir Robert (d. 1627), "reputed to have by him the most money of any person in the kingdom"—a fact which, no doubt, recommended him to his Majesty, but he is now best known for his retort to the Earl of Arundel in the House of Lords: "My Lord," said the Earl, "when these things were doing your ancestors were keeping sheep"; "When my ancestors were keeping sheep," retorted the other, "your ancestors were plotting treason"—a shaft which might well be levelled at the Howards. This Robert Spencer was the grandfather of the first Earl of Sunderland, who fell with Falkland at Newbury, and great-grandfather of the second Earl (d. 1702) pilloried by Macaulay. It was the third Earl (d. 1722) who collected the famous Sunderland Library—the first of the two great Spencer libraries—which went with his son Charles to Blenheim. And here it may be as well to explain for the benefit of any of my readers who may not happen to remember what took the Spencers from Althorp to Blenheim that in 1733 Charles Spencer, fifth Earl of Sunderland (d. 1758), succeeded his aunt, the great Duke's daughter, as third Duke of Marlborough. Althorp, however, remained with his younger brother, John, and from him the present Earl Spencer is descended. As for the second Spencer Library, it was amassed by George John, the second Earl (d. 1834),

and was purchased by Mrs. John Rylands, of Manchester, in 1892. Presented by her to the city, it has now found its home in the splendid "John Rylands Library" in Deansgate.

To return to the church. The visitor from over the water will be sure to ask for the tombstones of two Washington brothers who were buried here, the above-mentioned Robert of Little Brington and his elder brother Lawrence—and for their benefit I give both inscriptions in full. The first is in the chancel:

HERE LIETH THE BODI OF LAVRENCE
WASHINGTON SONNE AND HEIRE OF
ROBERT WASHINGTON OF SOVLGRAVE
IN THE COVNTIE OF NORTHAMPTON
ESQVIER WHO MARRIED MARGARET
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER OF WILLIAM
BUTLER OF TEES IN THE COVNTIE
OF SUSSEX ESQVIER WHO HAD ISSU
BY HER 8 SONNS AND 9 DAUGHTERS
WHICH LAVRENCE DECEASED THE 13
OF DEC. A.D. DNI. 1616.

THOU THAT BY CHANCE OR CHOYCE
OF THIS HAS SIGHT
KNOW LIFE TO DEATH RESIGNES
AS DAY TO NIGHT;
BUT AS THE SUNNS RETORNE
REVIVES THE DAY,
SO CHRIST SHALL US
THOVGH TVRNED TO DVST AND CLAY.

(The arms—Washington impaling Butler—azure a chevron between three covered cups or.)

The second is in the nave:

HERE LIES INTERRED Y^E BODIES OF ELIZAB. WASHINGTON
WIDDOWE WHO CHANGED THIS LIFE FOR IMORTALLITIE
Y^E 19^TH OF MARCH 1622. AS ALSO Y^E BODY OF ROBERT
WASHINGTON GENT. HER LATE HUSBAND SECOND
SONNE OF ROBERT WASHINGTON OF SOLGRAVE IN Y^E
COUNTY OF NORTH. ESQ. WHO DEPTED THIS LIFE Y^E
19^TH OF MARCH 1662. AFTER THEY LIVED LOVINGLY TOGETHER
MANY YEARS IN THIS PARISH.

(Arms—Washington.)

Robert Washington, the father of these two sons, it was who migrated from Sulgrave to Brington in 1600, and ten years later sold the family property at the former place to his nephew, Lawrence Makepeace.

In the south wall of the church outside is a canopied niche containing the figure of a mediæval ecclesiastic, and to the south-west is the fine gabled rectory house built by Dr. Constantine Jessop, rector 1676–1696. John Evelyn, who visited Althorp in 1688, calls him Jeffryes. "Dr. Jeffryes, . . . preach'd the shortest discourse I ever heard; but what was defective in the amplitude of his sermon, he had supplied in the largeness and convenience of the Parsonage house, which the Dr. (who had at least £600 a year in spiritual advancement) had new built, and made fit for a person of quality to live in, with gardens and all accommodation according therewith."

So down the hill to the west and across Brington Moors to Whilton. These "moors" are now enclosed, but the road still runs across meadows and through gates—a fashion peculiar to the less thickly populated districts of the Midlands. As for Whilton, it is a cheerless, woebegone cluster of cottages, some of which, however, have wall inscriptions of good design dating from the close of the seventeenth century. The church, as far as I could see, was eloquent of late Georgian days, and the whole place has perhaps hardly recovered from the depressing influence of the Lord of the Manor of that period—a clergyman and a Warwickshire rector, who resided here, and directed that he should be buried, or rather immured, in his summer-house, "the doors and windows to be locked up or bolted, and to be kept as near in the same manner and state they shall be in at the time of my decease; and I desire that the building or summer-house may be planted round with evergreen plants, and fenced off with iron or oak pales, and painted of a dark blue colour." After this we can understand the historian when he tells us that his "eccentricities will long be remembered in the neighbourhood." Examples might be interesting, but, most provokingly, he records none.

I have to cross two main lines of traffic of very different dates in order to reach Norton, the L. & N. W. R., and Watling Street. You may follow the latter here for many miles in either direction, for it very rarely diverges from the modern road. Norton Hall in the sixteenth century was a second home of the Knightleys of Fawsley ; from them it passed to the Bretons with whom it remained for two hundred years, and was then purchased by the father of Beriah Botfield, a well-known archæologist and bibliographer (d. 1863), who set up a printing-press in his house, and whose library is still preserved there. There are monuments connected with all these families in the church, which also contains the fine table tomb and effigy of Elizabeth Seymour, a daughter of the Protector Somerset and wife of one of the Knightleys (d. 1602). Her son Dudley—Dudley was a fashionable name in the days of the Queen's favourite —also died in 1602 " ætatis suae 19," as the tablet put up in his honour tells us, " being a gentleman of singular hope, courage and other rare virtues." It seems that he served against Spain in the Low Countries, but " having receaved a musket shot in his necke in y^e^ defence of Ostend in Flaun' [he] came to Norton & in shorte time y^e^ bullet felle downe, wherewith a fever tooke him, whereof he died." Another tablet commemorates " Mrs. Anne Breton, wife of John Breton " (d. 1636), " temperate, chaste, keeping at home, good and subject to her husband." But the reader is getting wearied of churches and monuments, so we will inflict no more on him to-day, but, skirting the Park, rejoin Watling Street, and, leaving Brockhall and its portraits unvisited, follow it back to the " Globe."

Now it happened to be the third month of the war when I was staying at Weedon. The place was beginning to ruffle its feathers, and strangers, especially if armed with maps and other such paraphernalia, were looked at askance. Indeed, I am afraid that I was the occasion of certain qualms to my agreeable messmates at the " Globe," the newly-arrived colonel in charge and one of his captains, and when a certain pocket

compass which I had the misfortune to leave upon a gatepost out Everdon way fell into the hands of the police, matters began to look serious, and the worthy colonel had some trouble over the telephone on my account. Of course it was gratifying to find that the authorities were so wide awake, but had I not been able to refer them to a name well known in the county I might have found myself in an awkward predicament. However, I had not much longer to spend at Weedon ; in another couple of days I was to finish my programme. Ashby St. Ledgers I was determined to visit as the home of the Catesbys, and " you ought to see Guilsborough and its fine old Grammar School."

Well, I already had a sign-post acquaintance with the last-named place, for it lies on the high ground only three miles south of Naseby and three miles west of Cottesbrooke. To Guilsborough, therefore, I journeyed first. It is rather a long ride from Weedon, but the distance can be considerably shortened by taking the train to Welton station (a long way from Welton village) and cycling thence through Watford and West Haddon. Watford, too, is worth seeing. Lord Henley's park there is said to contain the richest pasturage in the county, and the church is a good example of Decorated, and not over restored. The fine, large chancel has three traceried windows of the Perpendicular period on the south, while on the north is a richly ornamented " founder's tomb," or " Easter sepulchre." But the peculiar feature of this side is a large chantry chapel opening by arches into the chancel and the north aisle. These two arches are now unfortunately blocked up and the chapel utilised as a Sunday school. There is also an ugly modern north porch—a poor companion to the beautiful early Decorated south porch opposite. These blockings, however, as well as the partitions which cut off the west ends of the nave and south aisle, for the tower is built over the end of the nave, could easily be removed.

An agreeable ride through a grass country takes me to West Haddon, a large village of no particular interest except for its

church. The interior of the nave has unfortunately been scraped and blue pointed (Brington is among the churches which have escaped this disfigurement), but by way of compensation there is a magnificent carved Perpendicular roof springing from the figures of saints. The arcades are Decorated and support a Perpendicular clerestory with very large windows, next to the massive tower the most conspicuous feature of the church. The late Norman font is square, and at the east end of the north aisle a modern window has been inserted in the old Decorated frame, which retains the ball flowers in the head and a fine pillar in each jamb.

Three miles more and up a steepish hill and I have arrived at my journey's end. Let no cyclist dismount in Guilsborough hungry and expectant; if he does, he will be disappointed, for there is no encouragement given to the casual luncher. The village straggles far and wide and the only two points of interest, for I missed the "large Roman encampment called the *Boroughs*," are some distance apart. Of these let us take the church first. The interior we cannot inspect, for the door is locked, but to judge by appearances the loss is not great, for the restorer has evidently had a blank charter here. There is, however, a fine Early English tower with a later broach spire, which by the date it bears seems to have been rebuilt as late as 1613, and the churchyard in itself is a sight worth seeing. I am bold to acclaim it as the best kept churchyard in the county, just as Norton, which we visited yesterday, is, I dare not say the worst, but certainly one of the worst. The grass, the graves, the shrubs, the walks are irreproachable, and the whole effect is so much that of a garden of delight, that the custodians at once enlist our sympathies. There must be a fine view from the top of the tower, and I should expect to see again the dwarfed spire of Naseby and the wooded summit of Haselbech hill, while behind the lower range to the east I should look for the groves of Cottesbrooke and the tower of distant Brixworth. It is not everyone, however, who is willing to ascend an unknown church steeple at a moment's notice, and so I make my way

back to the Grammar School. It looks exactly what it is—a solid, well-built, dignified seventeenth century building, though the sundial over the porch bears the date 1823 and the words "Fronte capillata post est occasio calva." Distasteful only are the brick chimneys, which, good as they may be in themselves, do not harmonise with a stone building. The broken flagstaff above the entrance may, if you please, symbolise the fortunes of the institution. Refounded in the year of the Glorious Revolution by one of the Langhams of Cottesbrooke, it is now no more a school. It has no doubt been through the mill of the Charity Commissioners and seems at present to be tenanted only by a cottager's family. But you will receive a welcome from the woman in charge, who will show you the massive carved oak staircase which ascends to the top of the house, the large empty rooms, and the extensive prospect commanded from the windows, and you will come away with conjectures as to the next chapter in its history, for surely some use will be found for it "after the war."

I make my return journey to Welton in about half the time that the outward journey consumed, but it is now too late to think of Ashby St. Ledgers to-day, and as my train back to Weedon is not yet due I may fill up my spare time with tea at the comfortable station inn. But a fresh morning takes me to Welton Station again, and now I traverse the couple of miles through the leafy lanes westward which separate me from one of the most delectable spots in Northamptonshire. I hardly know which first to praise, manor-house or church, but they lie, as the custom is, close together, and you have the church on your right as you pass through the flat-topped archway beneath the "plot-room" into the manor precincts. Skirting the garden wall on the right, you are soon face to face with the venerable gabled front of Tudor times, at right angles to which runs a range of kitchens and offices of earlier date and lower elevation. You may long for a sight of the interior promised by such a fascinating survey, but in the absence of the owner, Lord Wimborne, this is impossible. This morning, however, per-

mission to walk through the gardens and view the south and east sides of the house is courteously extended. The south front has, I understand, been considerably altered in recent times, and that not for the better. It is now a rich jumble of turrets and oriels, all worked in the deep orange stone of the district, and in the centre is the wide open door of the hall. When you turn the corner of the house a surprise awaits you. Attached to the northern end of the east front is a charming black and white building transported hither a few years ago from the Eastern counties and still feeling rather puzzled by the change. The gardens are delightfully arranged with an expanse of water below, and the elevation being nearly 500 feet they command an extensive view northwards towards Kilsby and Crick across a verdant and well-timbered country characteristically English.

But it is of Catesby and Gunpowder Treason that those of my readers to whom the name of Ashby St. Ledgers is familiar will be thinking, and indeed it is with his head full of bonfires and fireworks, and perchance of Town and Gown, that many a visitor must have made his way here. "Ashby," like "Catesby," smacks of the Danes, and neither place is very far from Watling Street. It was from Catesby, some half a dozen miles to the south, out by the head waters of the Leam, that the family took its name, and hence came the progenitor of the John Catesby of Ladbroke, Warwickshire, who in Edward III.'s time married the heiress of Ashby. This Ashby, we may note in passing, did not take its distinctive title from any lord of the manor, but from a Burgundian bishop canonised in the seventh century, and its church is one of three in England dedicated to him. To proceed with our story, from this John Catesby of Ladbroke, Robert, the conspirator, was the eighth in descent, as William, the "cat" of Collingbourn's famous distich,[1] was the third. "He was," says Dr. S. R. Gardiner[2]

[1] The rat, the cat, and Lovell our dog
Rule all England under the hog.

[2] *History of England*, i., 234.

" a man capable of becoming the leader in any action requiring clearness of head and strength of will. He was a born leader of men, and had the rare gift of a mind which drew after it all wills in voluntary submission. . . . As Catesby brooded over the wrongs of his Church—wrongs which were made the more palpable to him by the fact that so many of his kinsmen and friends were suffering by those evil laws—the idea arose within him . . . of righting the grievous wrongs by destroying both the King and Parliament by means of gunpowder, and of establishing a Catholic Government in their place." His mother, now living at Ashby, was a Throckmorton of Coughton, between Warwick and Worcester, and all round about were scattered the houses of many other Catholic families, all more or less intimate with the Catesbys. Robert Catesby himself resided at Lapworth, another estate belonging to the family, north-west of Warwick, and here he probably often discussed his schemes with his friends ; but a persistent tradition points to the room in the gate-house at Ashby as the place where the plot was hatched.

It was about 6 o'clock on the evening of Tuesday, November 5, 1605, that Catesby and four of his friends, John Wright, Christopher Wright, Thomas Percy, and Ambrose Rookwood, galloped into the west end of the village about a quarter of a mile from the manor-house. Guy Fawkes and his powder magazine had been surprised late on the previous night, and in the morning when the news reached them they saw that their only chance lay in flight. London is nearly eighty miles from Ashby, and the route was along the great north-west road through Barnet, St. Albans, Dunstable, Stony Stratford, Towcester, Weedon, and Daventry. Horse and man were thoroughly tired out by the time that they came in sight of Ashby, and Lady Catesby, Robert's mother, was just sitting down to supper in the wainscoted hall[1] with Robert Winter of Huddington,

[1] I am told that this hall has undergone drastic changes in the recent "improvements." Till then it had remained as it was in the Plot year.

another of the plotters, when a message was brought to Winter that Catesby wanted to speak with him "hard by the town's end." Hurrying thither, he learnt the news of the discovery of the plot, and advised instant surrender. He was, however, overruled by Catesby, and the whole party, fatigued as they were, rode on to Dunsmore Heath by Dunchurch, where, under the pretext of a great hunting match, a large number of Catholics had assembled, ready to act on the arrival of news of the success of the conspiracy. Catesby's idea was now to make for Wales, where he expected to be joined by a large number of malcontents. Accompanied by all those of the hunting party who could be induced to share his fortunes, he reached Winter's house at Huddington, near Droitwich, on the sixth, and on the next day he rode on to a house of the Littleton family at Holbeche, across the Staffordshire border. This was the last scene of the plot as far as Catesby was concerned; the officers of justice came up, and in the struggle that ensued he was killed. The two Wrights, John and Christopher, and Thomas Percy shared his fate.

The manor of Ashby on the attainder of the conspirator passed to the Crown, and in 1612 was purchased of the grantee by Bryan Janson, citizen and draper of London, in whose family it remained for a century, and was then, in 1703, sold to Joseph Ashley, also citizen and draper of London, of Great Broughton, Cumberland. From the Ashleys it came by marriage to another Cumberland family, the Senhouses, by whom it was sold to its present possessor.

It was not to be expected that the fifteenth century would pass without leaving its mark upon the church, and the Catesbys were not a race likely to regard with indifference a building which was not only the eye of the parish, but also, standing as it did at their gates, their own family chapel. Almost the whole structure, in fact, as we now see it belongs to the first half of that century, and is with great probability credited to John Catesby (d. 1437), the grand-

father of Richard III.'s adherent.[1] That we find it now pretty much as John Catesby left it is due to its good fortune in having escaped the heavy hand of the Victorian restorer, and we may now expect with confidence that such repairs as are, alas! really necessary will be carried out in the right spirit. When that day comes perhaps I may be allowed to plead that the organ should be set up in a gallery at the west end, as has been done at Islip. At present it fills up the east end of the south aisle and unblushingly serves to conceal three ancient brasses. Of its moral character I need say no more; as for its musical character the ancient clerk (his name Montgomery), opined that the old village band, which occupied the spacious platform at the west end of the same aisle, was much more harmonious. The "three decker" remains, as well as some of the fourteenth century carved seats which were preserved at the rebuilding,[2] and there is a fine canopied chancel screen with the base of the rood loft above it. This was reached by a stair, still perfectly preserved, contained in a round turret, resembling the one at Flore, in the angle of the south aisle. Two hundred years ago the chapel on the south side of the chancel seems to have been standing, but it has long disappeared, and the wall contains a couple of modern windows. The north chapel, once probably the Lady Chapel, is now known as the Arnold Chapel, from its having been used as a burial place by the owners of Ashby Lodge, to the north-west of the village. This estate was separated from the manor in the time of the Jansons, and in 1718 was bought by George Arnold, Esq., who built the present house there. He was a friend of Hogarth's, and a portrait of himself and his daughter painted by this artist is still among the gems of its fine collection of pictures. Ashby Lodge is now the

[1] This was the "Cat" (p. 290), Speaker of Richard's only House of Commons, and executed after the battle of Bosworth. It is hardly necessary to say that he is the "Catesby" of *Richard the Third*.

[2] The great pews in front of the screen are Jacobean, and belong to the Janson *régime*.

property of the Hibberts. Of the monuments in this chapel, the most conspicuous is the nineteenth century marble effigy of George Henry Arnold (d. 1844), whose ancestor, the above-mentioned George, died in 1766.

Passing from the chapel we may contemplate the mural monument of Bryan Janson and his family on the north wall of the chancel. Bryan (d. 1634) and his wife kneel opposite to one another at a prayer desk, and below them are their five sons and five daughters, while on the opposite wall their son John (d. 1657) has a tablet with a half-length figure to himself. Concealed by the organ are brasses to Thomas Stokes (d. 1416), and to William Smyght (Smith), a Warwickshire rector (d. 1510). The figures of Stokes and his wife are standing under a canopy, and below them are those of their four sons and twelve daughters, all like their parents holding up their hands in prayer. Here is also a small brass with the kneeling figure of a man in plate armour and a tabard with the Catesby arms, doubtless a Catesby, and probably George (d. 1505), the son of the Speaker. He married an Empson of Easton Neston, and thanks to that connection perhaps was restored to his father's honours and estates. It is quite possible, however, that the brass does not now cover his remains, for by his will he directed that his body should be laid in his chapel before the image of the Holy Trinity, and that two marble stones at a cost of £6 13*s.* 4*d.* each should be placed, one on the tomb of himself and his wife, and one on that of his father and mother. The latter, with a fine brass affixed, is on the south side of the altar; and here Speaker William and his wife, Margaret Zouch, are seen under a double canopy habited in heraldic costumes, with an inscription recording that this "Willielmus" died "vicessimo die mens' Auguste" (1485). Now the battle of Bosworth was fought on August 22nd, and William was executed three days later, on the 25th; to explain the discrepancy it has been suggested that the engraver purposely omitted the "quinto" in order to cast a shadow over the manner of his death, and to suggest that he perished before the battle took place. The other

marble stone, which by the terms of the will should be in the chapel, is not there but in the north aisle, and now bears the brass of George Catesby's second son, Sir Richard (d. 1553). His elder son, William, died in boyhood in 1518, and a brass to his memory fixed on to one of the pews bears a Latin elegy, of which the reader may care to see the first half:

> Florentes Juvenes huc huc accedite passim
> Gulielmum Catesby cernite sub pedibus.
> Annorum tria lustra pium vixisse puellum
> Vix tunc hunc tenerum mors rabiosa tulit.

Lastly, there is in the chancel another marble slab which contained the brasses of Sir William Catesby (d. after 1471), and his two wives in winding sheets and six children. They had long disappeared, and much of the inscriptions too, but in 1913 it was discovered that the Northamptonshire Architectural Society possessed the figure of Sir William "the King's carver," and it was restored to its place.

So away from pleasant Ashby, and may St. Ledgedarius of Autun long have it in safe keeping. I have not half exhausted its delights, but I must away to Daventry, pronounced *Daintry* by the initiated, where, as an accomplished writer in the *Cornhill* has reminded us, resided the red-nosed innkeeper—one of many such worthies too well known to Sir John Falstaff. For the rest, it does not seem to me to be a town that will long delay the passer-by; the great London and Holyhead road is crossed by the wide principal street terminating in the church and station, and this is almost all that need be said about its twentieth century history. But, like many another quiet country town, it was a bustling place in the years before the railway, and a multitude of coaches, I forget the exact number, passed through it every day.

In the Civil War, the direct roads connecting Daventry with London and Oxford, Northampton, and Coventry naturally made it an important centre, and we have already noticed the King's six days' sojourn here before Naseby. The

inn at which he stayed still retains its name "The Wheat-sheaf," and is still the leading hostelry in the place. Baker tells a story relating to Charles's stay here which the reader

Daventry Church.

will not find in the histories of the period, and to which I may therefore introduce him. His authority is the MS. of "a Mr. Savage, entitled *Coritani Lacrymantes*," printed in W. D.

Rastall's *Antiquities of Southwell*.[1] Who the said Savage may have been, he does not say, but the writer of the MS. himself tells us that the story "was related to me by a person of Newark att that time in his majestie's horse." If this is so, it may have been one of the floating Naseby stories of the time; anyhow, here it is:

"About two hours after the King had retired to rest, some of

An Old House at Daventry.

his attendants, hearing an uncommon noise in his chamber, went into it; where they found his majestie setting up in his bed, and much agitated; but nothing which could have produced the noise they fancied they heard. The King, in a trembling, enquired after the cause of their alarm, and told them how much he had been agitated in a dream, by thinking he saw the appari-

[1] *A History of the Antiquities of the Town and Church of Southwell*, by W. D. Rastall, 1787. Another edition including *Newark*, 1801, 1819.

tion of Lord Strafford ; who after upbraiding him with unkindness, told him that he was come to return him good for evil ; and that he advised him by no means to fight the Parliament armie that was at that time quartered at Northampton, for it was one whom the King should never conquer by arms. Prince Rupert, in whom courage was the predominant qualitie, rated the King out of his approbation the next day, and a resolution was taken to meet the enemie.[1] The next night, however, the apparition appeared to him a second time, but with looks of anger assured him *that* would be the last advice he should be permitted to give him ; but that if he kept his resolution of fighting, he was undone. . . . He was often heard to say that he wished he had taken the *warning*, and not fought at Naseby ; the meaning of which nobody knew but those to whom he told his appearance at Daintree ; and they were all of them afterwards charged to conceal it."

In April, 1660, the neighbourhood of Daventry was the scene of the last attempt of the army under General Lambert to challenge the authority of the House of Commons. Lambert had already failed in his attempt to check the advance of Monk from the north and had been imprisoned in the Tower, but on April 10th, thanks to the co-operation of his bedmaker with his friends outside, he had effected his escape, and had made arrangements for a general rendezvous of his supporters at Edgehill. By the 22nd he had got together some six troops of horse and several of his old officers, when the Parliamentary commanders, Colonels Ingoldsby and Streeter, came up with him from Northampton, but his men fell away from him and refused to fight. Lambert himself was pursued as far as Staverton field by Ingoldsby, himself an old officer of Cromwell's and one of

[1] Charles broke up his encampment on Borough Hill early on the morning of June 13th, and the final resolution to fight was not taken till the morning of the 14th at Market Harborough, but "before leaving Daventry it was unanimously acknowledged by all present at a council of war held there that, if Fairfax followed hard, a battle was unavoidable." Gardiner, *Civil War*, ii. 241.

the regicides, where according to Pepys, "he was not able to fight one stroke, but desired of Colonel Ingoldsby several times for God's sake to let him escape." When the news reached London, where the alarm had been great, and £100 offered for his apprehension, the feeling of relief was general, but, wrote Pepys on the 27th, "I am informed that the Exchequer is now so low, that there is not £20 there, to give the messenger, that brought the news."

From Daventry back to Weedon is an easy run along the great road. Had longer delay been possible, I ought to have climbed to the top of the famous Borough Hill, but this afternoon I leave it and its "extensive view" a mile away on my left. The antiquarian with time at his disposal will, however, explore it thoroughly as well as the field known for centuries as "Burnt Walls," close to the road and believed to be the site of the Roman Isannavaria. Newnham now lies in the valley to my right, the skirts of Dodford are soon passed upon my left, and I return for the last time to the "Globe." An evening train transports me round two sides of a triangle to Blakesley, where the "Red Lion" receives me—now that I have left my military messmates behind, a solitary guest.

CHAPTER XIV

CANONS ASHBY—MORETON PINKNEY—WEEDON LOIS—WAPPENHAM—ASTWELL—GREEN'S NORTON—TOWCESTER—EASTON NESTON

A PLEASANT little green valley is this, watered by a tiny rivulet which joins the Tove above Towcester, while the Tove itself comes down from the high ground round Sulgrave to find its way into the Ouse near Stony Stratford. An out-of-the-way corner of England in a literal sense, for no main road has ever traversed it. The Great Central Railway, it is true, now cuts right through the centre of it, and if its two little branch lines, Towcester to Fenny Compton and Towcester to Banbury, have never been celebrated for their convenience or their traffic, its attractions for us are not the less on that account. Watling Street skirts it on the east, the Banbury and Daventry road on the west, and the Banbury and Brackley and Brackley and Towcester roads on the south and south-east. On the other hand, there are abundant lanes in all directions, some still green and primitive, others macadamised and quite good enough for the cyclist; among the latter our old friend the Banbury Lane runs right through it from north-east to south-west.

This bright October morning we will make our way by Adstone with its pleasant green to Canons Ashby since early Tudor times the seat of the Dryden family. The place got its distinctive name from a house of Augustinian Canons founded here in the twelfth century, and at one time seems to have borne the alternative appellation of Copes Ashby from Sir John Cope,

one of the Copes of Hanwell,[1] who had entered upon the monastic estate soon after the Dissolution. His daughter Elizabeth married John Dryden, the first of the family we hear of in connection with Ashby, and the great-grandfather of the poet. The most distinguished member of the family after the poet was Sir Henry Dryden, the fourth baronet of the new creation (1795). This accomplished antiquary died in 1899 and his topographical collections are now in the public library at Northampton. A new creation, it may be added, ensued upon the marriage of the heiress of the seventh baronet with one of the Page-Turners of Ambrosden, near Bicester.

Canons Ashby.

Canons Ashby stands at an elevation of about 500 feet, indeed the whole district with which we are now concerned might be described as "bracing," varying as it does from 600 to 400 feet. Our road leads past the house, and a little further on brings us to the west front of the church, or rather of the remaining portion of it, for it originally extended 162 feet further to the east, the rest having been pulled down with the conventual buildings.

[1] *Oxford and the Cotswolds*, p. 91.

At the northern end stands the fourteenth century tower; the fine arcading to the south of it, together with the doorway (restored 1903) and the arcade of two arches dividing the body of the church from the north aisle, are very good Early English. The cloisters and other conventual buildings were on the south side of the church, where a few fragments of old walls may still be seen, and here too stood the house of the Copes built out of the materials of the Priory. This part of the estate did not come to the Dryden family till the latter part of the seventeenth century, when the Cope house, then divided into two farmhouses, was pulled down. The church, though it still serves as the parish church, is now a private chapelry, and a chaplain is appointed and paid by the lord of the manor. This arrangement is a survival from the pre-Reformation practice of setting aside a portion of a monastic church for parish purposes. Here this portion was perhaps that now standing, and was doubtless spared for this very reason. It was then served by a perpetual secular vicar appointed by the prior and canons, as is evident from a petition presented to the bishop about 1432. It seems that the income of the priory—perhaps owing to the French war—had become so reduced that there was a difficulty in finding the stipend of the vicar. The bishop, therefore, on consideration of the payment of twelve pence per annum to the episcopal exchequer and sixpence to the archdeacon of Northampton, granted permission for the church to be served by one of the canons themselves, and as far as we know this arrangement continued down to the Dissolution, when the layman who stepped into the shoes of the canons had to find his own chaplain.

Another story from the same source, is as follows: One of the priors had absconded, perhaps under stress of the same deficit which had compelled the suppression of the secular vicar, but the bishop's own words in his injunction to his commissary-general for the archdeaconry shall speak for themselves; I

[1] *Visitations of Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln*, i. 33.

quote Mr. Hamilton Thompson's translation of the original Latin :

"The public knowledge of the fact, whereof the report waxes daily, brings to our hearing, as we relate with sorrow, that our brother William Coleworth [*i.e.* William of Culworth] who represents himself to be prior of the priory of Canons Ashby, of the order of St. Augustine, of our diocese, growing lukewarm in religion, negligent of his charge and slothful in his order, has left the path of religion, and is embracing the world and its enticements, and madly abandoning the flock of the Lord entrusted to his care and guardianship, the which he ought at the peril of his soul to have preserved from burning in the heat of the day and wandering in the darkness of the night, is letting it go in wretched case without a head or leader, as though he had not its charge, among the mountain deserts to be torn in pieces by the teeth of wolves, leaving as it were the temporal goods of that place at the disposal of the public exchequer, and, as it appears, utterly surrendering the priory to destitution."

His lordship's abrupt descent from "mountain deserts" and "the teeth of wolves" to "as it were" and "the public exchequer" is rather disappointing, but there is no mistake about it, when he comes to the fulmination of his sentence. The truant William is cited to return to his duties within a month, or be for ever deprived of his office and emoluments. As for the "destitution," if our conjecture is worth anything, this was rather the cause than the effect of his transgression ; in any case, we do not know whether the citation had its effect.

North of the church was the gate-house leading into the precincts. Traces of this remain, and hard by, beneath a thirteenth century structure, is the well from which the water was conveyed to the conventual buildings by leaden pipes (still existing) beneath the floor of the church ; it is now conveyed to the house in the opposite direction. A beautiful example of an old country house of moderate size is this ancient home of the Drydens. They were a Cumberland family, a fact which may explain the peel-like tower to the house, and after their

connection with the Copes resided here for more than a century before they became possessed of the rest of the estates, including the Priory. John Dryden (d. 1584), Elizabeth Cope's husband, seems to have built the greater part of the house, to which additions continued to be made down to about 1650. As for alterations of a later date than 1650, they belong principally to the time of Queen Anne, when many of the old mullioned windows gave way to the comfortable sashed windows of the period, and one of the great charms of the present house lies in the fact that it has escaped any kind of "restoration." It forms the four sides of a quadrangle with two wings projecting twelve feet from the north-west front into an old-fashioned walled garden. But the principal view is to be had from the tower front which looks south-west across the small deer park and fish-ponds down the valley towards Trafford bridge, Edgcote[1] and far across the Cherwell to distant Edgehill. The early Tudor windows of the four stages of the tower form a striking contrast to the two lines of tall sashed windows on either side of it. I have said enough to indicate the fascination of Canons Ashby, but I might also tell of the richly ornamented ceiling and chimney-piece of the drawing-room (*c.* 1650), the hall hung with weapons and armour of the Civil War, and the "book-room," which, until the present century, could boast a first folio Shakespeare. The dining-room is floored and wainscoted with the timber of a single oak from the estate, and among the family portraits are crayon likenesses of Mrs. Creed (p. 80) and of Glorious John as an old man in grey coat and wig.

That the poet was well acquainted with Canons Ashby and that he was a visitor to the house in the time of his uncle, the second baronet (d. 1658), may be taken for granted. The earliest of his letters which has been preserved is addressed to his cousin Honor, whose admirer he was. It was sent down from Cambridge by the hands of a clergyman, and in the elaborate lover's phraseology of the day thanks her for a silver "inkehorne" which she had sent him. His "fairest Valentine,"

[1] *Oxford and the Cotswolds*, pp. 102-109.

however, did not bless her "humble votary" with her hand, and though she survived her admirer for some years she died unmarried. Her younger brother, John of Chesterton, has been already mentioned (p. 72), and it was to admit the hearse or catafalque at the funeral of her elder brother, Sir Robert, in 1708, that the west doorway of the church was mutilated.

Other famous visitors to the house are said to have been Spenser, the poet, and Samuel Richardson, the novelist. John Aubrey, who derived his information from "John Dreyden Esq., Poet Laureat," writes in his *Brief Lives*: "Mr. Edmund Spencer . . . was an acquaintance and frequenter of Sir Erasmus Dreyden. His mistris, Rosalind, was a kinswoman of Sir Erasmus' lady. The chamber there at Sir Erasmus' is still called Mr. Spencer's chamber." Now "Sir Erasmus' lady" was Frances, daughter of William Wilkes, of Hodnel, Warwickshire, and the identity of Spenser's Rosalind—of whom, as Spenser lovers know, he was not the successful suitor—is disputed. The *Dictionary of National Biography* inclines to the theory that she was the daughter of a Lancashire yeoman called Dyneley. As to Samuel Richardson, there is no doubt of his intimacy with the family in the time of Sir John Dryden (d. 1770), the last baronet of the old creation. Readers of *Sir Charles Grandison* will remember that the home of the heroine was at Selby House, within a drive of Stony Stratford, and the first of the interminable series of letters of which the novel is composed is addressed to Harriet Byron from "Ashby Canons," where the writer, Miss Lucy Selby, cousin of Harriet's, is on a visit. And if further evidence is required, the library at Canons Ashby still possesses a collection of "sentiments" gathered from the novels and printed in 1755, which contains the following inscription presumably in Sir John Dryden's hand:

> "April the 18 1758
> This Book was given me today
> by the hands of Mr. Richardson
> that worthy Friend his own self."

But fain as I am to linger amid "Dryden's groves of oak,"

(did time allow I would stroll round the park and admire the five pairs of William III. gate piers), I must push on to Moreton Pinkney—name well known to Oriel men in the old days, when a resident fellow would ride down from Oxford of a Saturday to take the Sunday duty. One of them, Thomas Mozley, a contemporary of Newman and Froude, has left us a grim and repulsive picture of the place in the thirties of the last century.[1] He made the parsonage his residence for three years and did his best to humanise the barbarous villagers of those days, and indeed many of the scenes he describes might have furnished the material for some of the most realistic passages of Crabbe. It is clear he was not happy here, but when he left to take charge of a parish on Salisbury Plain, where he remained a dozen years, he found the change scarcely more to his liking. Nowadays, what with railways (do not the Great Central expresses fly past within a mile of it?), county councils and old age pensions, Moreton Pinkney is doubtless a very different place, but the winding **S**-shaped course of the main street may be due to a practice prevalent not long before his time, when any squatter with the requisite amount of money and impudence would settle down on one of the commons and put up a cottage or public-house. For all this "Moreton is a good specimen of a Northamptonshire village, generally marked in this part of the country by great irregularity, high gables, Tudor windows, and striped stonework (the iron stone and oolite are used in alternate courses). There is almost always a green, mostly small, with a fine tree in the midst, usually a great elm." [2] It is a pity that the new houses are not modelled on the old style; even the old "Tarry"[3] well, once covered by beautiful brown stones, has had an ugly blue brick erection put over it.

If you are interested in Mozley and the "Oxford Movement," you will of course halt at the church, right at the further end of the village near the site of the second common, though there

[1] *Reminiscences chiefly of towns, villages and schools*, 1885, vol. II.
[2] Murray's *Handbook*, p. 149.
[3] Where a halt for a gossip took place.

is nothing particular about it to detain you. The Early English chancel was carefully rebuilt in 1845, and from it Newman is said to have taken hints for his church at Littlemore. In Mozley's time the chancel arch was filled by a "tympanum"—a boarding which served as a background to the rood, and afterwards to the Royal Arms. It is probable that the restorers, who also made away with the rood loft stairs and the low side window, imagined that these tympana were a mark of the "churchwarden" period, but we can hardly complain of their removal, for in the absence of the screen and rood loft they were meaningless.

A tortuous course through an uninhabited country takes me to Weston, a large little-known hamlet with an old Tudor manor-house, end-on to the road and bearing the date 1588, and so a mile further to Weedon Lois, a place chiefly consisting of one long street which makes a curve round two sides of the church. There was a small Benedictine Priory here, a cell to the abbey of St. Louis (or St. Lucien) near Beauvais, but like the village we have just left it also has the cognomen of Pinkney, the family to which both manors belonged after the Conquest. The church has a cruciform appearance inside, but outside the cross shape is concealed by the fact that the nave aisles are as wide as the transepts are long. A brass plate set up in 1899 commemorates the courage of William Losse, who was vicar here during the Civil War, and the story may be read at length in Walker's *Numbers and Sufferings of the Clergy*. It seems that the vicar had already suffered from the depredations of the Parliamentary troopers, and that on a certain Sunday in July, 1643, a party of them rode over from Northampton with the intention of carrying him off as their prisoner. They found him conducting the service in the reading-desk, and their leader "commanded him *to leave off his Pottage*, and *to follow him*." Losse thereupon left the church and an altercation followed in the churchyard. At length he broke away from his would-be captors and took refuge in the church, barring the door against them. By this time the congregation were

trying to get out by the door on the opposite side, where one of the troopers was attempting to ride his horse into the church. Losse, however, attacked him with the door-bar and tried to knock him off his horse, "which made the Fellow keep off, and so Mr. *Losse* got time to Bar fast that Door likewise." But the other door was now being hammered in and the vicar took refuge in the tower, reached the leads by a trap door, and, dragging up the ladder after him, laid it across the opening. Meanwhile all the soldiers had ridden into the church "Spurring and Switching their Horses, purposely to endanger the People." The people were, of course, the rest of the congregation who were still in the church, and who implored the men to desist and "withal to consider that Mr. *Losse* was a Gentleman of a good Family." Their spokesman, however, minded, like Jack Cade, to spare none but such as go in clouted shoon, would listen to no such intreaties: "*What do you tell me of Birth and Descent? A Plague take him and his Gentility. I hope within this Year to see never a Gentleman in* England." After this they burst into the tower and up to the trap door, through which they fired their pistols, but without effect. They managed, however, to wound their victim with their swords. "At last having received a *Hurt* in his *Hand*, having a Vein pricked with one of their Swords, his Blood flowed so fast upon the Troopers underneath him, that as they Bragged there, and in other Places after they were gone thence, they *thought they had dispatched him*." So after admiring the Norman font ornamented with scallops and nailheads in the south chapel, and execrating the terrible glass of the east window, I strike a pleasant bridle-path to the left which takes me back into the Blakesley road.

If you turn to the left after passing under the railway by Blakesley station and follow the lane to Slapton[1] you will find

[1] I am told that all these "forest" villages round Towcester used to be singularly remote, and the people quite wild. They were too small to keep schools, and too far away to send the children elsewhere. Even in the nineties of the last century there were young people who could neither read nor write, but they made *excellent* domestic servants.

yourself for the first time in the Tove valley, four miles above Towcester. We do not stop to see the sixteenth century wall paintings in Slapton Church, but hasten on to Wappenham and the fascinating tower of the manor-house at Astwell, halfway between that village and Helmdon. I had first caught sight of this mysterious tower many years ago while riding from Towcester to catch the Banbury train at Helmdon, and had always felt curious about its history, but no one I spoke to about it could tell me anything, and Baker was then an unknown book to me. Vague rumours had indeed reached me of a crusty farmer and a discourteous dog, but I soon discovered that if they ever existed they were now no more. First, however, for Wappenham, where, after borrowing the church key at the vicarage, I make my way to the church. It is a spacious building, both the chancel and nave having the low-pitched roofs of the Perpendicular period, since which apparently there has not been much money to spend upon the fabric beyond the necessary repairs. The north arcade has round arches and circular piers, the south, pointed arches and octagonal piers, and the chancel arch is unmistakable Early English. In the south-east angle of the nave is a canopied niche, probably of the same date as the south arcade, ornamented with foliage above and ball flowers below; the squint near this niche has been blocked up. There are a few brasses, some of them fragments only, including two to the Lovett family of Astwell.

About halfway to Helmdon, where the road drops into the valley, a turning to the left leads through fields to the manor-house. If you keep to the left you may make your way over the hill to Silverstone and Whittlewood Forest, where Edward of York won his future Queen, and lost his most powerful ally, but fate forbids me this journey to-day, and I am wholly bent upon the mysterious tower. The undulations of the land and the many trees on this side hide it from me till I arrive before the southern front of the manor-house. What remains of it is now a farmhouse, and in excellent order, and the tower which

stands on its east side shows but little trace of the wear and tear of its four hundred years. I meet with a most courteous reception from the farmer, Mr. Treadwell, and his wife, who are by no means insensible to the interest of their beautiful home, and am forthwith shown all I wish to see.

The history of the estate, which was worked out by the indefatigable Baker, begins in the middle of the fifteenth century with one Arthur Brooke, whose son made it over, by way of an exchange, to the first of the Lovett family, who held it for the next hundred years. This was Thomas Lovett (d. 1492), whose brass we saw in Wappenham Church. These Lovetts seem to have been people of some consideration, intermarrying as they did with the Danvers family of Dauntsey and the Fermors of Easton Neston. At length, about 1560, the heiress of the last Lovett brought Astwell to her husband, John Shirley of Staunton Harold, the ancestor of Earl Ferrers and of the Shirleys of Ettington, and a home of the Shirleys it continued to be for the next two centuries, till, in 1763, Washington Shirley, fifth Earl Ferrers, sold it to the Grenvilles, to which family when Baker wrote it still belonged.

The history of the building must be largely a matter of inference from the existing remains, but we will start with the assumption that the fifteenth century moated manor-house of the Lovetts was succeeded by the Jacobean mansion of the Shirleys, which extended further to the west than its predecessor. As to the latter, Baker writes: "The mansion was partially, if not wholly, rebuilt by Sir George Shirley, bart., as appears by the arms of Shirley [on the entrance door to the tower] with his initials G. S. and the date 1607." That the existing dwelling-house incorporates what is left of this mansion there can be no doubt, but the greater part of it seems to have been taken down by the Grenvilles of Stowe after it passed into their hands. The present south and west fronts are gabled and have mullioned windows, and what was formerly one large room is divided up into two. The best of these has a fine marble fireplace carved and ornamented with two shields

of arms for Sir George Shirley (died here 1622) and his two wives.[1]

As just noticed, Sir George's arms appear again on the entrance to the tower, which we may now explore. That it was the gatehouse tower of the earlier house is hardly open to doubt. As an example of the domestic tower it may be compared with the tower at Canons Ashby, though this was never a gatehouse tower and must be at least half a century the later of the two. The original doorway has been built up, but a later one has been opened beside it. There is a basement with porter's lodge on the right of the entrance, and two upper storeys, the floors of which are still in good preservation, but the interior from top to bottom is in an appalling state, for, *horresco referens*, it has been degraded into a pigeon-house; and I really forget the number of cartloads of manure obtained when at long intervals a clearance has to be made. The room on the first floor has what appear to be shields of arms under the whitewash, and there is a blocked-up doorway at this level, which possibly opened into an external gallery. Both this room and the one above it are provided with garderobes. From the leads you get a good view of the site. The gatehouse would open into a court round which the house, protected externally by a moat, was built, and beyond this the large fish-ponds are still to be seen. Such was the house which I imagine that Sir George Shirley took down, either wholly or partially, just as his own house was in its turn taken down nearly two hundred years later. It is of the Shirley house that Bridges writes: "Behind the gatehouse is a little court, and an entry into the hall. The hall windows project *en ronde* and have battlements over them. The wainscot and chimney-pieces in several rooms are adorned with the arms of the family, and with other carved work; and the windows, which are of chrystal, are stained with flowers, birds, horses and other ornaments. At the east end of the great parlour was formerly a chapel, where *Dr. Sheldon*, after-

[1] Frances, daughter of Henry Lord Berkeley, and Dorothy, daughter of Thomas Wroughton, of Wilcot, Wilts.

wards archbishop of *Canterbury*, and *Dr. Dolben*, afterwards archbishop of *York*, are said to have successively officiated as chaplains to the family." Sheldon and Dolben were both Oxford men, Oxford is only some five and twenty miles distant, and a chaplaincy in such a family as that of Shirley was probably a valuable piece of preferment for a rising man.

The only other name linking Astwell to the outside world is that of Selina Countess of Huntingdon, and patroness of the Calvinistic sect known as "Lady Huntingdon's Connexion." She was the daughter of the second Earl Ferrers, and was born at Astwell in 1707. She was a warm supporter of Howel Harris, and after she became a widow, in 1746, she lived chiefly at Trevecca in Breconshire, in a house near to that of the "Holy Family of Love" which he founded there. But she was buried at Ashby de la Zouch (1791) "in the suit of white silk which she wore at the opening of the chapel in Goodman's fields."

I regret to say that this is all I have to tell of this interesting old place. It has now passed (by sale in 1862) into the hands of the Douglas-Pennant family, and it is much to be wished that they would undertake the cleansing of the tower. I now bid farewell to my kindly hosts, and regaining the road I cross the Tove and ascend gradually to Helmdon, a large village divided into two distinct parts by the river, and, like Barnack, celebrated in the days of yore for its freestone. Here I bend to the north and get back to Blakesley through Weston and through Plumpton with its small nineteenth century church and Elizabethan manor-house.

There is not much to be said for the road from Blakesley to Towcester along the north side of our green valley. The only village on the way is Green's Norton, which we have already mentioned in connection with the Greenes of Drayton. It was from them in fact that the place took its distinctive appellation, while they on their part, as already noticed (p. 66), are said to have derived theirs from the village green of Boughton, three miles north of Northampton, and not to be confused with the Boughton of the bold Buccleuch. Their reign here lasted from

1355, when the manor was purchased by Sir Henry Greene (p. 65), to 1506, when it passed to two coheiresses, the younger of whom married Sir Thomas Parr of Kendal, and was the mother of Henry VIII.'s last Queen.

Now this same Green's Norton, for truth must out, is notorious throughout the antiquarian world for the destruction of its fine series of Greene monuments, figured in the *Succinct Genealogies* (p. 66).[1] In this case Puritan enthusiasm cannot be pleaded in excuse, for the iconoclasts can hardly have begun their sport before the eighteenth century, and it was not till 1826, when the church was repewed and beautified, that the business received its finishing touches. The process included the destruction of the chancel arch, and chancel and chapel screens. These things are better managed now, but of the restoration of 1891 I can say nothing. All honour to Mr. Gilbert Flesher, of Towcester, who protested against the proceedings of 1826, and thereby incurred the displeasure of the curate in charge. This gentleman replied that the beautifiers had been actuated "by a proper spirit," and had preserved of the monuments what they could.[2] And, in fact, a few fragments actually do survive.

Towcester consists chiefly of one long street, and though once an important stage on the London and Holyhead road, would now be a name unknown to the ordinary person, were it not that an inclement autumn evening had compelled a certain benevolent personage to take shelter at the hospitable "Saracen's Head" (now the "Pomfret Arms") on his return from his unsuccessful mission to Birmingham. But in these degenerate days there are no hostile encounters between the Blues and the Buffs to give us any relaxation from our present task. We must see what there is to be seen, and I may frankly say that that is not much. Indeed, after a glance at the Mound and the Church, we shall probably be glad to refresh

[1] These engravings were reproduced by Baker for his second volume.

[2] The curious may read his letter to Mr. Urban in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for 1826 (vol. xcvi., part ii., p. 317).

ourselves with a stroll in Easton Neston Park, which stretches over the slopes on the opposite side of the Tove.

But if there is not much to see, there is much to be read about Towcester by those who have the courage to wade through Baker's twenty-six folio pages—beginning with the Romans, for the fact that Roman coins and Roman pottery have been found here in abundance points to its having been a Roman station, and it has generally been identified with the Lactodorum of Antonine. It is thus the fourth Roman settlement with any claim to the dignity of a town that we have met with in the county.[1] In recorded history its first appearance occurs in the struggles of Edward the Elder with the Danes, when according to the Chronicle he wrought the burgh at Towcester with a stone wall, that is, he built a stone wall (a rare thing in those days) round the town; but what about the Mound? Shall we class it with Clifford Hill (p. 24) as a "Fort consisting only of a mount with encircling ditch or fosse," or shall we decide, as Mrs. Armitage would evidently like to do, that it is of Norman origin, and was once crowned with the wooden tower of a Norman castle? Possibly the alternatives are not mutually exclusive, there was certainly an encircling ditch, now filled up, though as far as I know no traces of a Norman bailey have been discovered. It now stands in a private garden, and—the usual fate of these relics of the past—has had its significance destroyed by a plantation of trees. You may get a glimpse of its forlorn condition over the garden wall, and adjacent to it is (or was) the moat which defended the burgh on the east.

The outstanding feature of the church is the massive tower built of the rich brown stone from Whittlebury Forest. Edward IV., who, we know, had special reasons for regarding this neighbourhood with favour, made a grant of the stone to the town from the Royal quarries. When the tower was built the church had already become collegiate, or, to be more exact, included a college of two priests founded in 1448 by William

[1] The others were Castor, Irchester, and Bannaventa (on Watling Street between Whilton and Norton).

Sponne, rector of Towcester and archdeacon of Norfolk, to say Masses for his soul. The altar served by the college stood at the east end of the south aisle, and the collegiate house, part of which remains, was to the north-west of the church. The archdeacon's counterfeit presentment lies on a table tomb with open cusped arches in the south aisle—his college chapel, as we may term it—and within the arches beneath the representation of his corpse.[1] This tomb has had a curious history. The archdeacon was a benefactor to the town [2] and for that reason some respect was always shown to his resting-place ; accordingly, it seems to have remained undisturbed till 1835, when the monument was removed from under the arch dividing the aisle from the chancel " to make room for the new pewing of the church." At the same time, the innovators thought it advisable to deepen the actual grave ; they therefore opened it and discovered the skeleton perfect within a rough stone coffin. The monument itself and the effigies are, with the exception of the head and hands of the upper figure, of clunch. This upper figure is vested in the choir habit of a canon or collegiate priest—cassock, surplice, and tippet—and these were originally painted in their proper colours, but at some period the trustees of the archdeacon's benefaction had painted all these vestments a sombre black. The head and hands of the figure were of oak, and so they remained till the restoration of 1883, when the black paint, including what was left of the original colours beneath it, was stripped off, and the oaken head, with its closely cropped hair, was replaced by a brand new stone one with a wild and most unecclesiastical shock of tresses. The hands were apparently spared, but what became of the original head—a portrait, probably—no man can say.

This was a piece of vandalism which even the restorers of the

[1] The cadaver or emaciated corpse, says Mr. Prior (*Medieval Figure-Sculpture of England*), is characteristic of the last Gothic period, ending 1550.

[2] He gave to the town the Talbot Inn (then called the Tabard) and his coat of arms may be seen in one of the windows.

Gothic revival[1] might have been thought incapable of; two centuries earlier it is what might have been expected. But in those days respect for their benefactor seems to have then preserved his tomb inviolate, though apart from this the usual havoc of all things Popish was made. A tract of 1642, quoted by Baker, sees the vengeance of Heaven in the fate of a churchwarden of that date, Robert Stichberry by name. "Being at that time Churchwarden . . . it hapened that he had an urgent desire to remove a glasse window fairly painted; for effecting whereof, hee with some other of his complices did batter and utterly breake and deface the same." The townspeople petitioned the patron of the living, the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, to make good the damage, but all the answer they got was that those who pulled the window down should put it up again. The perpetrators were thus left to their fate. Mrs. Stichberry died first "exceedingly tormented on a sudden in her limbs." Soon afterwards the churchwarden himself "fell extreme mad, raving in a most fearful and strange case as amazed all his neighbours who were spectators, inasmuch that five or six men could hardly rule him, and so continued in that extraordinary manner howling and making a noise till he died. Next after this the sister of the said Robert Stichberry, whose name was Anne Stichberry dwelling in the same town, who affecting not the book of Common Prayer but making (for these two years past almost) a scorn thereof, she having the same bound up with her Bible, did much loath the sight of it, so as at the last she tore it out with her hands." In consequence of this presumptuous act "her hands that tore the same began presently in a most strange manner to rot, the flesh flying from the bones," etc. Such was the story of the orthodox pamphleteer, and no doubt it was greedily devoured by the gossips of the day. But the good people of Towcester had little reason to bless either King or Parliament. When the war broke out the town was the one Royalist garrison in the county, but in January, 1644, the

[1] They did away with the good west gallery of 1627, but that is only what one might expect.

troops were withdrawn for Rupert's unsuccessful attempt upon Aylesbury, and it was henceforward occupied (and plundered ?) by both parties in turn. There could be no security for a place on the great north-west road only sixty miles from the capital.

There is no village at Easton Neston, only the church, and the great house with its appendages, but whatever may have happened at Edgcote,[1] it is not recorded that the present mansion has spurned the cottage from the green. It was built after the Restoration of King Charles by Sir William Fermor, second baronet and first Lord Lempster (Leominster), and its predecessor, the home of the Empsons and earlier Fermors, stood lower down nearer the river. The house as it stands is a magnificent square block in the Italian style, and was finished in 1702, the architect being Nicholas Hawksmoor. The parapet which is now adorned with urns was till 1755 surmounted by antique statues which formed a part of the Arundel marbles, but in that year they were sent to join the rest of that collection at Oxford.

The vicar resides in Towcester, and a few years ago the church could only be seen under the convoy of the vicar's man. When I applied for the key it happened to be a Sunday, and the guide being unobtainable, I was not able to see the fine series of Fermor monuments, and owing to the impenetrable iron fence very little of the exterior. But I make no complaint; in these days of motors and cycles an isolated church cannot safely be left open to the chance wayfarer. In the park you may wander at will and look far across the Tove into Whittlebury Forest, and into Buckinghamshire.

At the end of the fifteenth century Easton Neston passed into the hands of Henry VII.'s unpopular favourite, Richard Empson, the son of a sieve-maker in Towcester, and in the next reign his son sold it to the Fermors (Farmers), a family first heard of at Witney about the time of the battle of Bosworth. One branch lived at Somerton on the Cherwell, and afterwards at

[1] *Oxford and the Cotswolds*, p. 103.

Tusmore in the same neighbourhood but with this we are not now concerned. Richard Fermor was the founder of the Easton Neston branch, and of him a romantic story is told. After making his fortune as a merchant of the Staple he settled down at Easton Neston, where he lived in splendid style for many years. But he by no means approved of the ecclesiastical innovations of Henry VIII., and incurred that monarch's serious displeasure by sending assistance to a priest who had been his confessor, and was now expiating his loyalty to the Pope by an imprisonment in Buckingham gaol. For this shocking offence his estates were confiscated, and he himself committed to prison. On his release "stript of all he had," writes Collins, "the good old man retired to a village called Wapenham [*sic*], in sight of his former habitations, and lived in the parsonage-house there; the advowson of which had been in his gift, and the parson thereof presented by him. There he passed several years with a most consummate piety, and intire resignation." Now it so happened that in his palmy days he had had in his household "a servant, Will Somers, who by his witty or frothy discourses, passed for his jester; and afterwards served the King himself in the same office and capacity." For some years Will seems to have been unable to do anything for his old master, but at last when the King fell sick, and was in a mood for repentance, he saw his opportunity and brought the facts of the case to his Majesty's recollection. Orders were then issued for Richard Fermor's restitution to his estate, but Henry died before they could be carried out. Three years later, however, under Edward VI., he got back his house and some of his estates. Soon afterwards, in 1551, he died. His descendant, the builder of the present house, whom we have already mentioned, became Lord Lempster under William III., and his son in 1721 the first Earl of Pomfret. When the last earl died in 1867 the title became extinct, and his sister carried Easton Neston into the family of its present owners.

CHAPTER XV

PRESTON CAPES—BADBY—BYFIELD—HELLIDON—CATESBY—STAVERTON.

Woodford Halse, so called from the name of the manor to which it belongs in order to distinguish it from Woodford near Thrapston, was once as rural as any village in the country round, but the advent of the Great Central changed all this, and now that it is a thriving railway settlement, with all the air of a miniature Swindon or Crewe, the few old dignified houses that are left are deserving of our sympathy. Of the church Sir Henry Dryden wrote that its chief interest was "the old pewing which was tolerably complete in its original position. . . . The whole has been entirely altered (1878). . . . The whole is now of no value as an example," and he adds that he believes there is no old pewing left in its old position in this part of the county. It is best known to Oxford men coming from the north as the junction for Banbury, and to hunting men as a convenient centre for the Grafton and the Bicester. It was for the benefit of the latter that the handsome hotel was erected at Hinton Gorse, just west of the station, but if the visitor should find this, as he may well do under present circumstances (1917), but an echoing wilderness, he may rely upon being comfortably lodged and well fed at the "White Hart" in the village. Further attractions I cannot promise him, but he will find the place a convenient centre from which to explore the western portion of the county between Banbury and the Nene. Preston Capes, Fawsley, Badby, Charwelton, Byfield, Chipping Warden, and Edgcote may be named among the chief attractions within

easy cycling reach, and the byways that thread the fields in all directions (there is but one highway, the Banbury and Daventry road) are some of the most engaging in the county.

Let us then take the open road through the fields to Preston Capes. By the time we get to the top of the hill, on the northern slopes of which lies the village, we are ready for a rest, and can sit and enjoy the extensive view away over Fawsley and Everdon to the Nene at Newnham and far beyond—a country of hill and dale, mazy woodlands and deep rich pastures stretching north and west to Dunsmore and the Avon. With such a prospect before us we topple that "enemy of life," black care, from the saddle behind us, and resume our journey. A turn to the left brings us face to face with the church of Preston Capes—a wide "place" in front of it, and a vicarage garden on the right. The tower is what architects call engaged, for the steep slope preventing it from being built any further to the west, it breaks into the westernmost arches of the nave arcades. These arcades themselves are of different dates (a feature familiar to us by this time), the southern having round piers and the northern octagonal, but the church was rigorously restored in the worst period, and no more need be said about it. South-west in a meadow, where the cows are feeding, the rough broken ground marks the site of the castle of the Domesday lord, Hugh of Leicester, and without much difficulty you may make out the mound on which his tower stood. This Hugh also founded a Priory here, but soon changed his mind, and removed his foundation to a less isolated spot at Daventry. After his days, some two centuries later, the family which gives the village its distinctive name were in possession, but it has now long been part of the wide Fawsley estates. The other Preston, "Preston Deanery," is some distance off, a few miles south of the county town.

So down through pleasant lanes, across the brook, and up the other side till we reach the gate of Fawsley Park. Passing through this, we soon take a turn to the right, leaving the ruined early sixteenth-century Dower House which possesses

the only twisted brick chimneys in the county, below on our left, and entering the famous Badby wood through a grove of cherry trees, the leaves of which are a bright dark red beneath the September sun, we find ourselves in Badby village at the foot of Arbury Hill. The village is pleasant enough, but has not much to detain the traveller; in these days when education is becoming more and more a Government concern, he may care to notice the girls' school on the village green erected early in the nineteenth century by the Lady Knightley of the day, but he will only waste his time at the church, where the unbroken row of Perpendicular clerestory windows is the only remarkable feature, and as for the unattractive tower, it was built after the fall of the spire in 1705. He will do better to climb up to the camp at the summit of Arbury Hill (700 ft.), whence he may survey the country for many miles round.

A steep climb from the village brings me to the Banbury road, and it is an easy run of four miles through Charwelton into Byfield. Now Byfield, before the days of the upstart Woodford, was the most considerable village in these parts; it is still a postal centre and has a station on the Midland Junction Railway; therefore, although a turn to the left at the cross roads would take me back to Woodford in a couple of miles, I shall make a halt in the village, beg a cup of tea at a pleasant cottage, explore the quaint streets, and visit the spacious church. The three most striking points about the church are its size, its colour, and its lofty steeple. The colour, a rich brown, is due to the local ironstone, which here is not relieved, as in some of the churches we have seen, by an admixture of lighter coloured stone; the size and massive proportions of the edifice point to the numbers and prosperity of the inhabitants in the fourteenth century, when the present church replaced a smaller one. In the chancel one is struck by the height of the three Perpendicular windows on the north side, and there should have been three similar ones on the south, but the place of the westernmost one is taken by a small chapel called the "Trafford aisle"—a name which also survives at Trafford bridge over the

Cherwell at Edgcote. The tower with its spire is 140 feet high, and at the angles of the tower, itself lofty, are massive polygonal and embattled turrets, rather too heavy, perhaps, for modern taste. For the rest, the large south porch, the ball flower ornament of the west door, and the carved bench-ends, contemporary with the church and since 1873 collected in the two main eastern blocks of pews, are deserving of mention. But I have lingered so long at Byfield that it will be dark by the time I get back to the "White Hart" at Woodford.

Now the traveller who has not yet visited Fawsley[1] and Charwelton will of course set aside a day for these delightful places, but, as I have already paid my tribute to them in another place,[2] I shall take leave to salute them in silence to-day, and alighting at Charwelton station I turn my face westwards, and leaving to my left the farmhouse that guards the infant Cherwell, hold on my course till I reach the cross roads on the confines of the shires of Warwick and Northampton. Here a sign-post points me to Hellidon, which is the first village on my route to-day. Far be it from me to contradict the Guide-book which describes Hellidon as "a picturesque village lying in the midst of broken and hilly ground"; this it doubtless is, but, like Whilton, it seemed to me forlorn and woebegone enough. Few human beings were to be seen, and such of the inhabitants as I spoke to (exceptions, no doubt) had an air of strange indifference to the world beyond their own doors, and, like Falstaff, seemed to have forgotten what the inside of a church is made of. However, I climbed up to the churchyard to find that the "very pleasant view" was shut out by trees, but that the south side of the church with its western tower was decidedly attractive, as indeed these rich ironstone buildings cannot help being, and that the interior was over-restored and uninteresting.

[1] It is a melancholy thing to have to record that the contents of this splendid old county mansion were sold by auction in 1914. It now stands empty and will probably some day become a public institution of some sort. As a friend of mine who knew it well remarks, no money can ever recreate the atmosphere of a house.

[2] *Oxford and the Cotswolds*, pp. 101–113 (including Edgcote).

After these experiences I bear away from Hellidon without regret, cherishing brighter hopes of Catesby, little more than a mile further on by the direct road—Catesby which gave its name to the historic family of which I have already written, and in these latter days famous for the great tunnel of the G.C.R. But let the cyclist beware. Hellidon is a maze of winding lanes, and nothing is easier than to miss the right road, and miss it I do, only to find myself in the midst of a vast wilderness of grass, stretching on all sides as far as the eye can reach. At last I come upon a solitary sign-post in the centre of nowhere, and find that one track will take me to Southam, another to Shuckburgh. (Are not both these in "Shakespeare's Country," and has not the Archdeacon put them both into *his* volume?) I resolve, therefore, to avoid all temptation to commit lese-majesty, and straightway espy another arm pointing to a closed gate, but this arm has the word "Catesby" painted upon it, so I take heart and force my way through another mile or so of rough and well-nigh trackless grass, till at length I discern a human habitation in the distance.

A solitary heron now rises from a tiny rivulet, which I afterwards discover to be the head waters of the Leam. I pass through yet another gate and "fortune; all is fortune!" have reached Catesby safe at last. Catesby, be it noted, consists of two distinct settlements. At Upper Catesby on the hill are Mr. Attenborough's modern mansion and the surviving fragment of the old parish church, destroyed at the Dissolution. On the flat is Lower Catesby with the modern church, built in 1861.

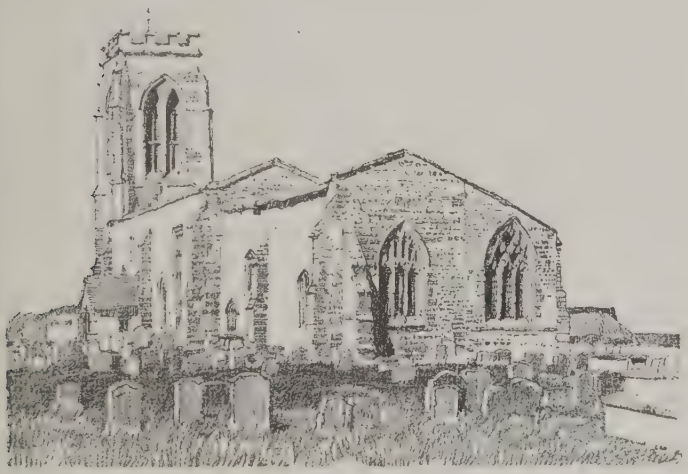
Here, too, on the level stood Catesby Priory, founded in the reign of Richard I. for a Prioress and her sisterhood. Enriched with the donations of successive benefactors, this foundation kept the even tenor of its way for four centuries and a half, remote but not unfriended. Its prosperous career was assured by the institution of an office which, so far as I know, was not usually found in such societies. There were no banks and no lady clerks in those days, and it will not therefore be uncomplimentary to the sisters if we suggest that financial skill was one

of their rarer accomplishments. At any rate, in this case they were provided with resident masculine assistance. This was rendered to them by an officer, nominated by the convent and admitted by the Bishop, entitled the Warden, or Master, of the House. Upon him was laid the duty of administering the revenues and keeping the accounts; we should call him the bursar, but he seems here to have filled a position of special honour and dignity. Possibly as time went on the nuns found it advantageous to dispense with such an expensive luxury, at any rate the Bishop's registers contain no record of any admission to this office after 1370.

At the nunnery of Delapré in the beginning of the fourteenth century the archdeacon had to denounce certain worldly nuns as apostates, but the sisters of Catesby seem to have maintained their reputation for piety and hospitality to the last. When Henry VIII.'s Commissioners came down to Catesby, they reported to Cromwell that they had not found such "dyscrete enterteynment" at any other religious house, and that in the matter of charity to the poor it was without a rival in the county; "we founde [the house] in verry perfett order, the priores a sure, wyse, discrete, and very relygious woman, with ix nunnys under her obedyencye, as we have time paste seen, or belyke shall see." They submitted, therefore, that if any house was to be spared, a more deserving one was not to be found.

Needless to say no attention was paid to this plea, and the conventual buildings with the manor was granted (doubtless for a consideration) to one John Onley, Esq., in whose family the estate remained till the beginning of the eighteenth century, when it was purchased by the Parkhursts, the best known member of which family is John Parkhurst, the Greek and Hebrew scholar (1728–1797). He succeeded to the property some thirty years before his death, but resided chiefly on another estate which he possessed at Epsom. A manor-house of William III.'s time with cedar-panelled rooms took the place of the priory buildings in which the Onleys had resided, but this was in its turn pulled down in 1862, when the mansion on the

higher ground was built. So it has come to pass that the few relics of the nunnery which still survive must be looked for in the little modern church already mentioned. It seems that when the old church on the hill was destroyed, the priory chapel took its place as the church of the parish, and so continued till it shared the fate of the manor-house in 1859. During this period it had been enriched with carved oak fittings, which were now transferred to its successor, and here, if we ask for the key at one of the cottages opposite, we shall find them. There



Staverton Church.

is a fine seventeenth century covered pulpit, the cover serving the office of a sounding board, and much carved oak of the same period worked into the modern bench-ends. Of the pre-Dissolution work three canopied arches containing sedilia and a piscina have survived.

I now climb the hill through the park and reach the Staverton road, which runs northwards along the summit of the ridge. Below me on the right is Hartwell Spring, the source of the southern Nene, and at Staverton, a large straggling village, I

strike the Warwick and Daventry road. The fourteenth century church is very interesting; it has a fine western tower, and the long nave arcade on the north side, together with the aisle, extends to the east end without a break. This aisle includes a curious chantry chapel, with sedile and piscina on the south, and a small Elizabethan monument on the north.

It is now an easy run along the Warwick road into Daventry, where I cross my former route at right angles, and turning to the left just before the church is reached I soon come in sight of one of the great ponds that feed the Grand Junction Canal. The canal itself I cross just where it enters a long tunnel on its way to join the Oxford canal at Braunston. Braunston, though within the boundaries of our county, I know only by repute; it was, in fact, the *ultima Thule* of a happy party of Oxford holiday folk, who once hired a coal barge in their salad days, and journeyed hither o'er the smooth translucent wave in a leisurely, picnic, but not incurious fashion. Of their adventures more might be told, but the greater part of the voyage lies outside the limits of the present volume, so the canal and its story left behind, I am now amid the leafy lanes of Welton. The village and The Place are passed on my left, and another two miles up hill and down dale brings me once more to the hospitable railway inn at Welton station, where, after a well-earned cup of tea, I may take the train either to Rugby or Northampton, and bring the present chapter to a conclusion.

CHAPTER XVI

CHACOMBE—THORPE MANDEVILLE—CULWORTH—SULGRAVE—MARSTON ST. LAWRENCE—THENFORD

I HAVE now reached the last of the Northamptonshire areas through which my excursions have taken me in this volume. It may briefly be indicated as the district between the Cherwell on the west and the G. C. R. on the east. It is a table-land of from 600 to 300 feet, and is intersected by few considerable depressions. Through the centre of it runs our old friend the "Banbury Lane," and Banbury I shall make the starting place of the two journeys I have to make, premising that if anyone prefers to take off at Brackley he may make the same journeys in the reverse direction.

From Banbury, then, I ride through suburban Grimsbury by the road that in other days took me to Cropredy and fair Edgehill, but when I reach the Great Central Railway arch, I head off to the right up an avenue of hedgerow elms and get to Chacombe, a delightful little village of picturesque cottages and winding streets comfortably perched upon the hillside. On my left I pass a solemn eighteenth century-looking manor-house, and wonder whether it conceals any traces of the Augustine Priory founded here in John's reign by one Hugh of Chacombe, who finally joined the fraternity himself and spent his declining years within the shelter of its walls. Then I climb up by a field-path to the churchyard, and search in vain for the Guide-book's "remarkable and beautiful crosses, sculptured on stone in memory of former priors, amongst which that of John

Fearneall, brother of Corpus Christi Guild, Coventry, prior of Chalcombe, 1499." Perhaps the long grass was the cause of my failure, but the man who was cutting it had never even heard of them, so perhaps a stranger may be pardoned.

My next village is Thorpe Mandeville. The road ascends through an arable country, and soon joins the "Banbury Lane." At the point where another road diverges to the south-east is an extensive earthwork, fairly perfect in parts, and commanding a wide outlook across the Cherwell valley.[1] It appears to be one of the hilltop forts of which Borough Hill was a larger example. The village, about a mile further on, lies high and has a remarkably spruce appearance; no long grass in the churchyard here, the turf is as smooth and well swept as any gentleman's lawn, and at the time of my visit was affording wholesome exercise (*rubore non sudore*, as old John Lawrence says) to the vicar and his children. The over-restored church has a saddle-back tower, and a figure of the patron saint (St. John Baptist) on its exterior.

A deep valley separates Thorpe Mandeville from Culworth, the village which lies at the top of the opposite hill, and the steep descent calls for careful riding. Now Culworth had long been familiar to me by name, both from the story of "the Culworth Gang"[2] and from its having been one of the seats of the Danvers, a leading family in this part of the country and also in Wiltshire (p. 278), whose history has been ably written by Dr. Macnamara. The Culworth branch settled here in the fifteenth century, and flourished till the death of the last baronet in 1775, but all that now remains of their manor-house is much altered. Sir Samuel Danvers, the first baronet, was noted for his loyalty to the royal cause, and at the first assizes held after the King's execution, he and all his train of servants appeared dressed in mourning. The village consists chiefly of a single

[1] This may probably be identified with "Leigh Grounds" (Bandon Leys), where Charles I. held a rendezvous of his troops on his way from Culworth towards Banbury, June 28th, 1644.

[2] *Oxford and the Cotswolds*, pp. 100–101.

long street, and near the village cross, of which as usual the steps and base only remain, is a small inn, where a rest for lunch may be made. Lower down, across the street, was the Danvers' house. It is a modest unpretending place now, but in the days of the Civil War it was in its glory, and here two nights before Cropredy Bridge—away down in the valley there—Sir Samuel entertained his Sovereign. The church which I pass as I quit the village is hardly worth a visit, but north of the churchyard is another of the moated mounds like the one at Towcester. We shall find another directly west of the church at Sulgrave. I turn to the right at the end of the village, and the tower of Sulgrave soon becomes visible, but the short cut is impossible on a cycle, and I have to traverse two long sides of a triangle before I can reach the place where, after due inquiries, I make the best of my way to the famous Washington House.

Considering that the estate, which had belonged to the priory of St. Andrew Northampton, only came into the possession of the Washingtons, a north-Lancashire family, at the Dissolution, and was held by them for less than a century (1539–1610), and further that the great-grandfather of the President did not emigrate to the New World till just before the Restoration, it is rather singular that it should have taken rank as the fountain head of the family, and that as such it should have become the shrine of pilgrimage for all pious Americans. This, however, it has continued to be ever since Washington Irving made his way hither, and introduced Sulgrave to his compatriots. The House had long served as a farmhouse and had consequently undergone the usual alterations in its domestic arrangements, but at last, in 1911, it was purchased by public subscription in England and in the United States, as a memorial of the cordial relations between the two countries, and it is now in course of restoration to its former state. But though perhaps once larger than at present, it was never a great house, and as one approaches it from the north its humble, unambitious exterior is hardly suggestive of the dignity one associates with a manor-house. As to date, a wide margin must be allowed, but the high-gabled

porch, with its square labelled doorway, and some of the internal features are suggestive of the fifteenth or early sixteenth century. The present windows are modern insertions.

And now for a brief note on the family. As we have already seen, the Washingtons were north-country people, and the first migration of any member of the family into Northamptonshire took place in the early part of the sixteenth century. The Spencers of Wormleighton and Althorp were, as we know, great flockmasters. The mother of young Lawrence Washington was connected with them by marriage. She was a Kitson of Hengrave in Suffolk, and was aunt to the wife of the Sir John Spencer who died in 1586, and whose tomb we saw at Brington. What, therefore, was more natural than that the thrifty Lancashire yeoman should send his son down to the Midlands to enter the wool business under the auspices of his cousin? The venture was a success. By 1539 Lawrence had made a fortune and was enabled to purchase the estate at Sulgrave. In 1532, and again in 1545, he was Mayor of Northampton, and died in 1584, when he was buried in Sulgrave church at the east end of the south aisle. His grave is marked by a slab of grey stone, with a set of six brasses, now mutilated and plundered, indeed two of them were stolen (and carried off to America?) as late as 1899. One bore the inscription :

HERE LYETH BURIED Y^E^ BODYS OF
LAURENCE WASSHINGTŌ GENT &
AMEE HIS WYF BY WHOME HE HAD
ISSUE IIIJ SONS AND VII DAUGHTS
W^C^ LAURENCE DYED Y^E^ DAY
OF AN^O^ 15 & AMEE
DECEAS^S^ED THE VI DAY OF OCTOBER
ANN^O^ DNI 1564.

The arms, which also appear on the porch of the manor-house, are: Argent, two bars gules, and in chief three mullets of the second. It will be noticed that when Lawrence had the brasses engraved after the death of his wife, he left spaces for the date of his own—a not uncommon practice, but they were never

filled in. Soon after his death, the fortunes of the family began to decline. About 1600 his two grandsons, Lawrence and Robert, possibly accompanied by their father, Robert Washington, moved to Brington, where (at Little Brington) we saw the house of the younger Robert, and in 1610 the Sulgrave property was sold to Lawrence Makepeace, the son of a sister of the elder Robert. In Brington church we found the tomb of Lawrence Washington (d. 1616), whose grandson emigrated to America in 1657, and was great-grandfather of the President.

Sulgrave Manor House.

Sulgrave long had an unenviable reputation as the abode of Forest poachers and other undesirable characters, and it was in the church that a member of the notorious Culworth gang secreted some of the spoil. This was no less a personage than the parish clerk, one William Abbott, a shoemaker by trade, and tradition relates that he never performed his part in the service without loaded pistols in his pocket. His bark was, however, apparently worse than his bite, for when justice overtook these marauders in 1787, and most of his accomplices were executed, he escaped with transportation for life. It only remains for me to climb the moated mound to the west of the

church, a relic of the past with nothing very distinctive about it, and then regaining the cross roads I bear to the south across a cultivated table land and at length descend into the well-wooded and well-watered seclusion of Marston St. Lawrence.

Now Marston, as the name indicates, is not a hill village like those we have just been visiting; it is the first valley settlement we have lighted upon since we left Chacombe, and with its fine church, notable manor-house, and pleasant cottages grouped among fruitful orchards and well-tended gardens, calls for more than a passing glance. The church stands where it ought, with the vicarage, on the opposite side of the road, and the spreading lawns of the manor-house clothing the slopes of a deep gorge which separates it from the well-shaded churchyard. Of its many trees the most remarkable is an ancient yew of enormous girth, which must have weathered more centuries than I care to guess at, probably more than twice the number of those during which the lords of the manor have lived at their present house, and the lords of the manor date at least from the Dissolution, when they came into the estate which the abbey of Shene had previously held. Tradition says that they had even then been long resident in the village, and they were certainly at the manor-house in the seventeenth century, when their representative, Sir John Blencowe, whose monument is in the church, was a Justice of the Common Pleas.

The most striking feature of the church is its lofty tower of the Perpendicular period, while the body of the building is perhaps nearly a century older. The north porch dates only from 1878, when the restoration took place. In the interior you may survey the Decorated arcade, the screen now moved to the west end of the nave bearing the date 1610, but said to have once served as a reredos (a curious situation for a screen), and the monuments, and then take a rest in the well-cared-for churchyard, which, by the way, is not the only cemetery that Marston ever had, for in the forties of the last century a Saxon burial ground was discovered, and the fact that the interments all had the feet to the north-east showed that they were made

before the district was converted to Christianity. This cemetery is now under the plough, and its position can only be found by those who know where to look for it.

We have now struck the byroad which runs from Middleton Cheney to Brackley, and another mile brings us to Thenford, another village of the vale, with its church remotely situated at its extremity in the low moist land by the stream. You may get as far at last (and a dark, silent, haunted spot it is), but unless you have called at the upper end of the village to provide yourself with the key, you will not gain access to the interior, and must leave to your imagination the old stained glass and Jacobean monument you are told it contains.

The manor-house which we passed on the left was built about 1765 by Michael Wodhull, the translator of Euripides, to replace the Elizabethan mansion in which his ancestors had resided. In Dibdin's *Bibliomania* he is said to appear as "Orlando," and so it may be, but the author evidently deprecated the identification by putting both the man and his books into another setting. From the great bow window of his library Orlando sees "an open country, intersected with meadows and corn fields, and terminated by the blue mountains of Malvern at the distance of thirteen miles." Wodhull's valuable library remained at Thenford for seventy years after his death, but in 1886 it was sold by auction and realised over £11,000. John Nichols in 1812 writes that, "This elegant and accomplished Scholar favoured the publick, in 1782, with the earliest English Translation of 'The Nineteen Tragedies and Fragments of Euripides' in 4 volumes 8vo. . . . He also printed, for the use of his friends, in 1804, a new edition of his 'Poems' in a very handsome octavo, with his portrait prefixed. He is still living at Thenford in Northamptonshire, not less esteemed in that neighbourhood for his humanity and general benevolence, than he is in the literary world as a gentleman of profound erudition, and a skilful Collector of Books." On his death, his estate passed to his wife's family and from them to the Severnes of Shropshire, who still hold it. Among the libraries of Northamp-

tonshire Althorp was, of course, *facile princeps*, but Thenford seems to have had a good claim to the second place, and among its bibliophils Michael Wodhull may rank next to Earl George John. We are now ready for the cup of tea provided by a friendly cottager, and then regaining our byroad join the Brackley and Banbury road at Middleton Cheney. Darkness is, however, beginning to fall, and we must postpone our halt at this village till to-morrow.

CHAPTER XVII

WARKWORTH—MIDDLETON CHENEY—FARTHINGHOE—STEANE—HINTON-IN-THE-HEDGES—KING'S SUTTON—AYNHO

THERE must be very few among my readers to whom the name Warkworth does not at once suggest the famous castle on the Coquet, far enough away from our present wanderings, and the amiable hermit of Bishop Percy. It will be news to them to learn that there is a small place of the same name, a place, too, which once boasted its so-called castle, in this remote corner of Northamptonshire, and it is to find this humble village that I am riding out of Banbury this morning, for I think I shall have more to say about it than about most villages of its size. In the first place, it is not too easy to get to. Half the village is at the foot of the hill and the other half, including the church, at the top. Then if you turn to the left too soon, you have to wheel your machine up a very steep grassy slope (these slopes abound round Banbury, as we know of old) and negotiate a maze of walls, gates, and passages at the top. With perseverance, however, you will find yourself in a charming village street with a pleasant confusion of rustic homesteads and blooming gardens on every side. Careful inquiry will tell you at which particular cottage to ask for the key of the isolated church—you can reach it only by footpaths, for, like Foxton, it stands in the fields.

Isolated and neglected—such at least is the inference that may be drawn from the fact that in the last century it twice passed through the hands of the restorer, and perhaps in the long reign of Roman Catholic squires (1669–1805) it had not

found very zealous protectors, while its rectors would regard it merely as an appanage of their comfortable vicarage of Marston. Nevertheless, the fine arcades with their octagonal columns have been spared ; round the capitals, on each alternate face grotesque heads are carved, and there are a few ancient carved bench-ends and a small south transeptal chapel with a good Decorated window ornamented with ball flower, a piscina and squint. But the glory of Warkworth is its splendid Lyons monument of 1350 or thereabouts. The figure of the recumbent knight is of the hard chalk known as clunch, and is considered by experts to have been executed in London, or at any rate by an artist of the London school, and to be the finest example of its period. The Lyons family were lords of Warkworth in the fourteenth century, and this probably represents the second of three successive Sir Johns. The table tomb which supports the effigy is unusually high, and its sides are richly carved and ornamented with "weepers" and the arms of Lyons, and of Chetwode,[1] for into this family the manor passed in 1385 after the death of the third Sir John, who had married a Chetwode. The monument to the first Sir John (d. 1312) with effigies of himself and his wife is of freestone, beneath an arch in the north aisle. There are also in the church four fifteenth century brasses and the fragment of a fifth to the Chetwodes. These brasses were very nearly lost at the restoration of 1841. The reader is perhaps getting tired of these annals of vandalism, but for the instruction of posterity they must needs be recorded. This is the story as told by Beesley in his *History of Banbury* : " In the present year, 1841, this church has been subjected to repairs ; and also to what some persons consider improvement, that is to say it has been fitted up with new deal painted seats, of which those in the nave are pews, or sleeping-boxes. To effect this change, the fine ancient open carved seats have been

[1] From the later character of these sculptures on the sides of the tomb it has been conjectured with great probability that the tomb itself is a Chetwode erection, and that the Lyons effigy was at some subsequent date placed upon it, the original Lyons tomb having been broken up.

removed; a few of the ends have been replaced in the side seats, but all the backs with their inscriptions, and the other beautiful carvings have been taken away, and the parts which escaped mutilation are now lying on the premises of a builder. The [Early English] tiles also . . . have been sold to adorn a summer-house: and all the brasses of this church, excepting two, were thrown away unheeded, and might have been purchased of the workmen for a pot of beer, until Mr. Danby, the builder, greatly to his credit, buried them for security beneath a large flagstone in the nave . . . Such an instance of vandalism . . . has not taken place in this neighbourhood since the destruction of Banbury Church in 1790."

In 1629 Warkworth was bought by one Philip Holman of London, scrivener, and it was his son who was the first of the Catholic squires. To Anthony Wood, who called on him in 1659, he seemed to be "a melancholy and begotted convert." But still "He was civil to us, and caused the church dore to be opened where wee found several antient monuments." In 1740 the estates passed to another Catholic family, the Eyres of Derbyshire, and with their last representative, Francis Eyre, Archdeacon Churton of Middleton Cheney had a pamphlet controversy at the end of the century.

The manor-house, which stood on the hill near the church, and is still remembered in local tradition as "the castle," was pulled down in 1806 by a certain Thomas Bradford from Sussex, who had purchased the property from the Eyres. In Wood's time it was "a stately house," and in its gallery were "the armes, quarterings, crests and motto's of several of the nobility in England." And here we are again reminded of Foxton, for there too, as the reader will remember, the great house has been swept away. In Baker's time a stone with the Chetwode arms and the date 1595—the sole surviving relic apparently of vanished splendour—was "in Mr. Taylor's garden."

I must not quit Warkworth without any allusion to the custom of drawing lots for the meadow strips, which still prevailed here in the time of Bridges (1720). He describes in

detail the ceremonies observed in one of the meadows known as "Ashe-Meadow," which was divided into fifteen lots. There was plenty of feasting, both at the "laying out" of the meadow "on the *Saturday* seven-night after *Midsummer day*," and at the lot-drawing and mowing on the following Monday. Besides the mowers there are "the Field-men" who do the laying out, and "the Hayward" and "the Master of the feast," who "have the name of *Crocus-men*" (? Low Latin *crocus*, a hook or crook), and "the two garlands." Before the mowing begins by a solemn proclamation, beginning "Oyez, Oyez, Oyez" in the approved style, all men are charged to observe "the custom and manner of this manor." All this was swept away by the enclosure of 1764, but my Oxfordshire readers will call to mind that a similar custom still obtains in one of their own villages.

It is barely a couple of miles on to Middleton Cheney, the largest village in this part of the county; its lofty spire rising to a height of nearly 150 feet is visible afar. Its best known rector in recent times, Ralph Churton (1792–1831), we have mentioned on the previous page. That a Midland rector should hold an archdeaconry in a distant Welsh diocese (he was archdeacon of St. David's) was one of the grievances that might well rankle in the heart of the Welsh churchman of those days. In England it was little accounted of, but one would like to know how often—if ever—the archdeacon visited his flock. No doubt, however, he was an exemplary parson at Middleton, and besides himself two of his sons have found a place in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, the one a Fellow of Oriel, and the other a Suffolk clergyman, and like his father archdeacon in a distant diocese. The latter is still remembered as a fine Spanish scholar, and as one of the editors of the *English Churchman's Library*.

There is not much to delay us in Middleton besides the church. Its distinctive name it got from its Domesday lord Ralph de Chenduit, and the manor continued in his family till the time of Edward I. No event of much public importance seems to have ever taken place here, but in the spring of 1643 when the Round-

head forces were advancing upon Banbury, then still in Royalist hands, they were attacked here by Lord Northampton's horse, and forty-six of them were buried in the churchyard.

The church recalls the splendid churches of the Nene valley, pinnacled tower, tall tapering spire, and richly ornamented porch. This last has two gables, rising above the roof of the south aisle, and its high-pitched solid stone roof reminds us of Barnack. In the interior the Decorated arcades, with blue and white stones in the arches, are attributed to that great building bishop Edingdon of Winchester, who was rector here 1327–1345. The hood moldings spring from carved bosses, among them the "wyvern," which was the crest of Thomas of Lancaster, executed at Pontefract in 1322. Perhaps this would hardly have found a place here if the builder had not sympathised with his politics. To come to modern times, the whole building went through the hands of Sir Gilbert Scott in 1865, and several windows were filled with glass designed by Morris and Burne-Jones. The great west window of the tower in particular contains the original design of the latter's "Six Days of Creation," a work exhibited in 1877.

The Brackley road soon descends into a picturesque valley where it crosses the Banbury and Buckingham railway and then climbs a steep ascent to Farthinghoe. I pass on the left all that remains of the manor-house, long ago the home of the Egertons, and still in that family as late as 1694, when Sir John Egerton presented his nephew, John Thicknesse, to the rectory. This John Thicknesse was the father of several sons who made a figure in their day, the best known being Philip, born here in 1719, and the author of three volumes of gossipy "Memoirs" and sundry volumes of travels. Another was High Master of St. Paul's School, and on his retirement from this post returned to this neighbourhood, and resided at Mollington, on the other side of the Cherwell. There is not much left to mark the former dignity of the Egerton house now, except a pair of stone gate pillars and a comfortable dwelling with a striking, sober-looking frontage standing back from the road, and in truth the whole

village as I ride through it does not belie the character that Thomas Mozley gives it of "the best-ordered village in the neighbourhood." This was in the thirties of the last century, when Francis Litchfield of Merton, a great orator and a better judge of a horse than most of his clerical neighbours, was rector. He was reported to be always riding about the country, and to be met with everywhere—except at home. But, writes Mozley, he "was the most prominent, most amusing, and, in some ways, the most useful man in my neighbourhood."

Now let us look into the church, the exterior of which (the tower was rebuilt in 1654) does not promise very much. But we shall find a Norman tower-arch, Early English arcades (one of the capitals has the characteristic stiff-leaved foliage), and on the south side of the chancel an eighteenth century schoolroom ;[1] it was originally a chantry chapel and Lady Chapel. Bridges, who calls it a Lady Chapel, states expressly that it was "cut off from the church and converted into a schoolroom." There is one rather remarkable monument : it is a figure arrayed in a loose gown and slippers, the head, over which is tied a handkerchief, resting on the right hand, the eyes raised heavenwards, in the left hand an open book ; and it is dedicated to the memory of George Rush, Esq., Patron of the Living, died in London 1803.

The road now turns to the right, and leaving on one side "Ouse well," one of the sources of the Ouse, skirts the edge of Steane Park about a couple of miles from Brackley. And here we shall quit it, for Steane (also spelt Stene) is by no means a place to be passed by in silence.

What loyal son of Oxford has not heard of Nathaniel Crewe, successively Rector of Lincoln, Dean of Chichester, Bishop of Oxford, Bishop of Durham, and, by his brother's death in 1697, Lord Crewe of Steane ? He may not have been privileged to "partake" of the elegant refection known as "Lord Crewe's benefaction," but he must once in his life at least have been an auditor of the Creweian oration, whether delivered by the Public

[1] See a parallel case at Watford, p. 287.

Orator or by the Poetry Professor, and it is to be hoped he is familiar with the splendid full length portrait of his lordship by Kneller in the Bodleian gallery—one of the gems of the collection. If this be so he will not disdain to accompany me to the spot where before "civil dudgeon first grew high" this prelate-peer was born, and where at a ripe old age (he lived to be 89) he died. Historians are, of course, fain to describe him as an accomplished trimmer, a very Vicar of Bray, and it is true that whether under Stuart or Hanoverian *régime* he managed to hold his own; but I am not here concerned with his public career, and will leave it at this, that the good he did is not in his case interred with his bones.

Nathaniel Crewe then was born in the old manor-house of Steane in 1633. This is said to have been a fine Tudor mansion with a balustraded gallery round the quadrangle, but it was destroyed by the Spencers when they came into possession of the property in the middle of the eighteenth century, and any fragments of it that may have been spared must be looked for in the farm buildings adjacent to the not very beautiful modern house which has now usurped its place.

So we ride down through the park into the valley watered by the infant Ouse and a few hundred yards from the great house find the small Jacobean church built by the Bishop's grandfather, Sir Thomas Crewe of Nantwich. It was this Thomas Crewe who became possessed of Steane by his marriage with Temperance Bray, the heiress of the younger branch of that family. It is always interesting to meet with old friends, and there may be among my readers some who made the acquaintance of the elder branch at Great Barrington in the Cotswolds.[1] But I am not going to inflict another pedigree upon them, and will only remind them that the founder of the family was Henry VII.'s friend and architect, Sir Reginald Bray, the proud discoverer of the Crown of England in the famous thornbush at Bosworth field. One of the gifts lavished upon him by his royal master was the manor of Steane, and in one of the hall

[1] *Oxford and the Cotswolds*, p. 295.

windows of his manor-house was his device—a thorn with a crown in it. John Crewe, the son of Sir Thomas, had been an active supporter of the Parliamentary cause in the Civil War, but, like many others of his party, he had favoured the restoration of the monarchy, and in 1661 was created Lord Crewe of Steane. Nathaniel, born at Steane in 1633, was his second surviving son.

Thus it was in the old house at Steane that the future Bishop spent his boyhood, and hither too he must have ridden over from Oxford as an undergraduate for his Long Vacations. No wonder then that he became attached to the place and made it the home of his declining years, and here too he brought the wife of his old age, Dorothy Forster of Bamburgh, the heroine of Sir Walter Besant's novel. It was four years after this second marriage (in 1704) that he bought the Bamburgh estate from his wife's family, and the charity that he founded in the historic castle was long administered by his trustees. As I have already hinted, he was no nonjuror, and though he survived till 1721 he was to all appearances a loyal adherent of the *de facto* government, but his neighbours in Northamptonshire seem to have believed him to be still a Jacobite at heart. Philip Thicknesse at any rate opined that it was probably his connection with Lord Crewe that "shut" his brother-in-law, Dr. Richard Grey, rector of the neighbouring parish of Hinton, "out of a mitre." Grey, it should be said, was also the Bishop's domestic chaplain. "Lord Crewe," Thicknesse continues, "was a staunch friend to the abdicated Family ; and as he lay dying on the marble hearth before the fire, he called out several times to my brother, saying, 'Dick, don't you go over to them—don't you go over to them.'" With this dying appeal ringing in our ears we are somewhat chilled by the sequel: "Dr. Grey, long before he died, was perfectly cured of *Jacobitism*. He observed that when the Pretender was at Rome, his friends here kept his birth-day, and spoke of him with concern ; but when he was in Scotland, they seemed to forget him *every day*. 'Now,' said the Doctor, 'if I had been King, I would have pardoned all those who shewed

their unshaken loyalty openly, and hanged all his cowardly adherents, who durst not appear to serve him when their services were wanting. But, thank God, that silly business is all at an end; and the Catholicks know the sweets of living under a Protestant Prince and a free Government.' "

But we have now arrived at the church, a small, rectangular building about 15 feet longer from north to south than from east to west. It evidently served as a chapel to the manor-house; but the living was a rectory, and after the death of Lord Crewe was annexed to Hinton. I understand that the rector of Hinton still holds a service here in the summer months. The interior is unequally divided into two portions by an arcade of two arches; the smaller portion to the north is the mausoleum of the Crewes, the larger or southern portion is the body of the church. The latter contains little but the reading desk and family pew, and the liberal-minded, or if you like Erastian, prelate did not disdain to associate six prayer-books bearing the arms of William III. with the Bible and Prayer-book used by Charles II. in the Chapel Royal. Passing into the mausoleum, we are confronted by a massive table tomb with the effigies of Sir Thomas Crewe (d. 1634) and Temperance his wife (d. 1619), by Nicholas Stone. There is a smaller monument with marble busts to the second Lord Crewe, grandson of the last and elder brother of Nathaniel, but what interests us most is a mural tablet of black marble beneath an architrave supported by two round Corinthian pillars with gilt bases and capitals, and surmounted by a mitre between two coronets; and we read that

Near this place Lyeth y^e^ Body
Of y^e^ R^t^ Hon^ble^ DOROTHY Lady CREWE
Wife of NATHANIEL Lord CREWE
And Daughter of S^r^ William Forster
of Balmborough in Northumberland K^t^
who died Oct^br^ y^e^ 16^th^ 1715 aet. 42.

A later inscription records the death of her husband ("Clerk of the Closet and Privy Counsellour") six years later. The Bishop was deeply attached to this second wife of his, so many

years younger than himself, and tradition relates that he frequently visited her tomb for religious meditation. We can sympathise with the distaste he conceived for the conventional skull with which the sculptor had finished off the monument. He expressed his feelings to Dr. Grey, and "The Doctor, who affectionately loved the Bishop, and wished to render his latter days as easy and happy as possible, sent to Banbury for the Artist . . . After much consideration, the Sculptor determined that the only thing he could convert the skull into was a bunch of grapes; and that was accordingly done, and so remains to this day."[1]

As we leave the church we may note the record on the pediment of the west front "Built by T. C. [Thomas Crewe] 1620," and the arms of Crewe and Bray in the spandrels of the south door. We must already have noticed the abundant pinnacles of the parapet, and the absence of a tower. An avenue to the right of the track by which we arrived now takes us back into the road, and a field-way on our right presently conducts us to the village, which rejoices in the mazy name of Hinton-in-the-Hedges. It is said that its distinctive appellation is not a very ancient one, and that it was bestowed upon it (since the enclosures of 1766 ?) to distinguish it from Hinton by Woodford Halse, but in any case there is a fascination in the sound, and, like Bampton-in-the-Bush and Moreton-in-Marsh, it has always been a challenge to the adventurous.

For myself, often as I had noted the name on the map, at last I had got to the place, and found a pleasant, clean-looking cluster of houses with a neat church at the top of the hill, and a solid rectory house adjoining. Now, had I known as much about Dr. Grey at the time of my visit as I do now, I should probably have sought for some memorial of him, and possibly pestered the rector with my inquiries, but coming as I did straight from Steane, the only monument which caught my attention was a tablet to Salathiel Crewe (d. 1689), an uncle of Nathaniel (the Puritan tendencies of the elder generation leak

[1] Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, viii., 371.

out in these names). I ought, of course, to have paid more respect to a table tomb of the time of Edward III., with effigies conjectured to be those of the lord and lady of the manor at that period, but I have no recollection either of this,[1] or of the "brass for Sir William Saunders (d. 1452)," and what more I have to say of Hinton-in-the-Hedges must therefore be confined to the worthy Doctor whose acquaintance we have already made.

Richard Grey, a prolific theological writer and controversialist, now best remembered for his "Memoria Technica or A New Method of Artificial Memory," graduated at Lincoln College (Lord Crewe's College, it will be remembered) in 1716, and five years later we find him already rector of Hinton, and secretary and chaplain to his lordship. The rectory he held till his death in 1771 at the age of 77, but I should not have troubled the reader with him again if his brother-in-law had not left us a picture of his courtship, which is not only delightful in itself, but also gives us a last glimpse of my Lord of Steane. To cut it down would only be to spoil the picture, and I therefore make no apology for quoting the writer's words at length; he is writing in 1788:

"Within a mile of Farthingoe [*sic*] stands a beautiful little church, a rectory of 80*l*. a year; near to which, in my memory, stood the antient and hospitable mansion of Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham; and thither the Bishop came to reside, being a temporal and spiritual Peer; and keeping open house, he was visited by all ranks of people far and near, and particularly by the Clergy; but it so happened, that my father, the nearest of his neighbours, omitted

[1] Mrs. Marcon (Miss Dryden) has kindly given me the following account of this interesting monument.

The effigy of the knight, presumably Sir William de Hinton living in 1346, is of considerable interest. Both in costume and attitude it resembles the wooden effigy of de Paveley at Paulerspury. Both figures as well as the de Lyons at Warkworth wear the cyclas, a short-lived fashion which is not shown in many effigies; and in only three brasses in England de Paveley's cyclas is sleeved and his basinet fluted—two rare features; he has no misericord, but both the Warkworth and Hinton effigies exhibit the early use of that weapon. Another point of interest about de Hinton is the position of his shield showing the enarme fastening it to his arm.

to pay his respects at Steane. The Bishop, who was a proud, stately Prelate, was hurt to find a respectable Clergyman, whose residence was so very necessary to him, to be so singularly remiss; and therefore sent Mr. Grey, his domestic chaplain, to visit my father, and to fish for the cause of what certainly seemed a slight, but which in fact was not omitted from any want of attention to his Lordship. It so happened, that before Mr. Grey had seen my father, he had seen my sister, an object which attracted much of his attention; and when he came into my father's study, instead of disclosing his business, he asked my father whether a young lady he had seen in the court-yard was his daughter? My father informed him he had two daughters, and that probably it might. 'Bless me!' said Mr. Grey, 'it made my heart leap, to see so fine a girl in such a country village.' This so offended my father, that he felt disposed to have made his body and soul leap together out of his study, had he not quickly perceived my father's disapprobation of so novel a mode of address. He then explained his errand; and my father, finding him to be an ingenious man, began to feel as much partiality to the young Parson as the Parson had conceived for his youngest daughter. Mr. Grey repeated his visits; and before my sister was well out of her white frock, she became the Rector of Hinton's wife, where she may be seen to this day, in her 84th year, with many traces remaining of that beauty which so suddenly caught the attention of her departed husband. Nor can I omit repeating a singular kind of joint compliment Mr. Grey paid her the day he had obtained (for it was not easily obtained) my father and mother's consent to fix that of his happiness. When walking with my sister and mother in the garden, he led her on the grass-plot, and, after walking round and round her several times, and admiring her person, 'Well,' said he, 'Miss Joyce, I own you are too good for me; but, at the same time, I think myself too good for anybody else.'"

I do not think that anyone has ever attempted to catalogue the once popular curative "Wells," which, though now quite forgotten, are scattered up and down the country, and which in the hundred years which followed the Restoration, when a journey to Bath or Tunbridge was a formidable undertaking, were the fashionable resort of invalids, real or imaginary. The well I am now concerned with is at Astrop, on my way from Hinton to King's Sutton, but there were two others, one in each of the adjacent counties within twenty miles' distance;

and I know of one on the hills beyond the Wye, which had such a vogue in the days of good Queen Anne that its glories eclipsed those of its neighbouring monoliths and moated mound. Astrop in its palmy days had its season with its breakfasts, dinners, card parties and dances, and these gaieties were of course a great attraction to Oxonians, who would break the journey at Steeple Aston on the ride down. Such outings can hardly have been looked upon with favour by the University authorities, and Antony Wood has the laconic note (July, 1676):

"Gentlemen given to gadding in this age—Astrop Wells."

Antony was of course familiar with the resort, and near the end of his life he tried the effect of the waters for four or five weeks, "taking up his lodging at Will. Upton's at King's Sutton neare thereunto."

The well had been held to be holy in Saxon times, and was dedicated to St. Rumbold, the infant son of a Northumbrian king born at King's Sutton, who, according to the legend, preached at Brackley when scarcely three days old—a feat, however, which he did not long survive. In Leland's time the chapel of the saint was standing "about a mile from Sutton in the Medes." But the virtues of the waters had long been forgotten when they were rediscovered, according to Aubrey in 1657, by Dr. Thomas Willis, who declared he would not now send his patients so far as Tunbridge, and, according to Wood, seven years later by the doctor's assistant Richard Lower, himself afterwards an eminent physician. In 1749 a new well was opened at King's Sutton, half a mile from the old one, and in 1754 a "Great Room" in which the breakfasts took place. But in 1777 the tourist William Bray reports that the place "is now out of fashion," and nothing is now left but a modern drinking fountain by the roadside, hardly worth stopping to look at, especially as the shades of evening are beginning to fall, and I must have time to make the acquaintance of Sutton before the train carries me away. It is, I find, a large pleasant-looking village with several good-sized, comfortable-looking

houses a hundred years old and more, situated on the summit of the hill above the station. The church is spacious, and the chancel one of Sir Gilbert Scott's restorations, but the whole is surpassed in interest by the wonderful spire, long familiar to me from the passing train and in distant views. It is the first crocketed spire we have met with since we left Rutland, but a distinguishing feature is the cluster of pinnacles at its base, one at each angle of the tower, from which it rises a hundred feet, and one dividing each of the flying buttresses springing from the outer pinnacles. When it was built, this church served an enormous parish extending from, and including, Buckingham on the east and Horley and Horton on the north-west, most of it forest, and it was not till the fifteenth century that it was curtailed. William Lisle Bowles (1762–1850), the poet, editor of Pope and canon of Salisbury, was born here; his father was rector of the parish and his mother was a daughter of Dr. Grey of Hinton and of Joyce Thicknesse.

Should you arrive at Sutton earlier in the day you may ride on to another charming hill village in the extreme south of the county. This is Aynho, where the new Great Western branch from Princes Risborough joins the old line, and thus completes a direct route from London to Birmingham. Or you may retrace your steps as far as the hamlet of Charlton and so work round to Aynho on the high ground past Rainsborough Camp, another extensive earthwork of the same class as Borough Hill or Arbury near Badby. South of the village is the Park, for the last three centuries the seat of the main branch of the Cartwrights. It was in 1615 that Richard Cartwright, of the Inner Temple, purchased the estate from Shakerley Marmion, the father of the Caroline playwright of the same name. The Cartwrights were strong supporters of the Parliament, and the present house replaces one burnt down by the Royalists on their retreat from Naseby to Oxford. It contains a fine collection of pictures and an extensive library, to which Wood contributed his "book[1]

[1] His *Historia et Antiquitates Univ. Oxon*, no doubt, which had come out in July of that year in two vols folio.

fairly bound worth 1*li* 13*s*." This was at the end of 1674, and it is gratifying to hear that soon afterwards the squire sent him "by Cable his tenant of Bloxham 2*li* 10*s*. for a requitall."

The church, which stands not far from the great house, seems to have become dilapidated by the eighteenth century; at any rate in 1723 it was rebuilt "in the Grecian style." The lofty tower was, however, allowed to remain, and it would be interesting to know whether the rest of the building was on a corresponding scale. Rectors Wylde or Wasse might probably have told us, but much as they wrote on other subjects, I am not aware that either of them left any records of their own parish. Robert Wylde, who in spite of his Puritan proclivities was a witty fellow and a genial companion, was presented to the living in 1646. He and a rival candidate had to preach a trial sermon each, and the story goes that when he was asked which of them had been successful he replied: "We have divided it; I have got the Ay and he the No." Another story tells how Richard Baxter, having heard sundry rumours of the rector's "injudicious facetiousness," called at Aynho on one of his journeys from Kidderminster to London, and secreted himself in a corner of the church during a service when Wylde was to preach a sermon. So far, however, was he from finding any ground for remonstrance that he apologised to the preacher afterwards, declaring that it was he who deserved rebuke for his "great uncharitableness and folly in regarding reports." But though Wylde was far from being a bigoted Presbyterian—he was a song-writer of some merit and the author of a couple of plays (*The Tragedy of Christopher Love* and *The Benefice*)—he found himself unable to subscribe to the Act of Uniformity and retired to Oundle, where he died in 1679.

Joseph Wasse, rector 1711 till his death in 1738, was a leading scholar of his day, and the great Bentley declared that after his own decease "Wasse would be the most learned man in England." His editions of the classics were famous, but, though "a facetious man in conversation," his sermons seem to have been too *stodgy* for a country congregation. His successor in the

living was besides Principal of Brasenose, and some of his books thus found their way into the library of that College. Among other noteworthy rectors is Matthew Hutton, a grandson of Ferdinando, Lord Fairfax, and the antiquarian friend and companion of Anthony Wood, and among the natives Sir Ralph Winwood (d. 1617) whose *Memorials of Affairs of State* appeared in 1725.

If you continue your journey southwards from Aynho, you will immediately find yourself in the parts of Oxfordshire east of the Cherwell, and there this book must needs bid you farewell.

CHAPTER XVIII

HUNTING

It is one of the advantages of hunting as a recreation for busy men that it takes them more out of themselves and away from the cares and worries of life than any other amusement. While you are hunting you have no time to think of anything else. It is not only physical exercise, but mental too. No thoughtless, careless, stupid man ever rode well to hounds through many long runs and during a series of years.—*T. F. Dale.*

I HAVE set these words at the head of this chapter because they seem to me to focus clearly the main argument for the existence of Fox-hunting. It is an amusement, relaxation, sport, or what you will, and like other sports, when regarded as what the old philosophers called "an end in itself," it is apt to become an obsession rather than a diversion. At least this is how it might strike an outsider, but let us hear an ardent and accomplished devotee of the chase in the middle of the last century: " I am afraid hunting is going downhill. . . I think there are few specimens left of the old hunting sort, who, devoted themselves exclusively to their favourite pursuit, and could not bear to hear it mentioned with anything like levity or disrespect , men whose only claim to social distinction was that they *hunted,* who looked upon their red coat as a passport to all the society they cared to have, and who divided the whole community, in their own minds, into two classes—' men who hunt,' and ' men who don't.' " And here let me say that the scope of this final chapter is limited to a short account

of the principal packs of these famous hunting counties for the benefit of the readers of this volume, and makes no pretence to be worthy of the notice of the hunting expert himself.

And first of all, at this momentous crisis in our history there is one question shouldering its way to the front, which I am thankful to say I am not called upon to answer. What sort of a future has Hunting to look forward to? what fortune awaits it after the War is over? Will it ever recover the position it once held in the life of Englishmen both of high and low degree? The conditions of rural life, it cannot be doubted, will be very different, but they need not be unfavourable to it. Most people will of course find that they have less money available to be spent upon so expensive a sport, and many would-be riders to hounds will have to be satisfied with some cheaper form of amusement. On the other hand the farmers who have always been friendly to hunting and have often themselves been among the keenest sportsmen (without their good will indeed how could the sport have survived?) have made money in the War, and when it is over will be as eager as ever to renew their favourite pastime, but I turn to a retrospect of the sport as it flourished in the distant days before the War.

When this volume was first contemplated there was some idea of associating Leicestershire with the counties of Northampton and Rutland, but it soon became apparent that this would take us too far afield, and that it was better to attempt a fairly intelligible presentation of two counties than a blurred picture of three. The three are, however, seldom separated in books devoted to the subject of the present chapter. In hunting language, "The Shires" as distinct from "The Provinces" is a term applied to the districts hunted by the Quorn, the Belvoir, the Cottesmore, Mr. Fernie's, the Pytchley, and the Woodland Pytchley, to which some people add the Atherstone and the Warwickshire, and these districts cover the whole of Leicester and Rutland, a large part of Northampton, and portions of Lincoln and Warwick adjacent to these counties. It is with two of these hunts only, or three if the Woodland Pytchley

is to be regarded as an independent pack, that we are concerned.

The expert who desires a particular description of hunting in the Shires during the last century may consult the writings of Nimrod, the Druid, Mowbray Morris, and T. F. Dale, but the amateur who will be satisfied with a general notion of the sport without being overdone with "shop" should turn to Whyte Melville's entertaining story, *Market Harborough*, from which I have just borrowed the description of "the old hunting sort." Mr. Sawyer, the Honourable Crasher, and Parson Dove may stand for three types oftener met with sixty years since than now. Take the last, the hunting parson in his white cord breeches, as C. T. S. Birch Reynardson describes him, "white choker four inches deep, starched to the consistency of pasteboard, and folded across the front with a simple small round jet pin, stand up collar and black coat." There was no lack of these divines in those days, and it may be questioned whether their disappearance is a wholly unmixed blessing to the countryside. For the benefit of my local readers let a few of these reverend names be commemorated, to wit, Vere Isham of Lamport, John Whalley of Ecton, William Dickins of Wollaston, Loraine Smith of Passenham, J. Tyrwhitt Drake and Cecil Henry Legard, both of Cottesbrooke, and, lastly, John Cave Humphrey of Laughton in Leicestershire, who is said to have sat for the portrait of Parson Dove. Let the black coat be noted, for in the last century the rest of the field hunted in "pink." Pink too was the dinner costume of the Melton men, while the Pytchley dined in "a black satin fall set off with two costly linked pins, blue coat with brass buttons and velvet collar." Those were the days of Clubs, such as the "Old Club" at Melton and the "Pytchley Club" at Pytchley Hall, which flourished between 1760 and 1819. And as Pytchley has not come in our way in the course of our excursions it may be as well to state that it is a small village between Wellingborough and Kettering, where the famous pack which adopted its name was set up about the middle of the eighteenth century. The

old Elizabethan manor-house built by Sir Euseby Isham was turned into a club-house, where members of the hunt could reside during the season. The hounds were moved to Brixworth by Sir Charles Knightley about 1818, and the club-house was pulled down in 1829.[1] Since then the Hunt has had no special connection with the village.

While Leicestershire is mainly a grass country, and those who hunt with the Quorn will tell you that there is no hunting country in the world like it, Northampton and Rutland afford varied stretches of grass, arable, and woodland. In the countries of the Cottesmore, Pytchley and Fitzwilliam grass and arable predominate; in those of the Grafton and Woodland Pytchley, woodland. At the present time (1918) much of the grass is going back to arable, and if the re-awakened interest in forestry continues the woodland is not likely to decrease.

The processes of disafforestation and enclosure which reached their climax in the middle of the eighteenth century had this effect upon hunting, that the fox took the place of the stag as the animal of the chase, and it was during this period (1750–1788) that the great packs of foxhounds now existing were established. Of these the best known is the Pytchley, the history of which has been well told by Mr. T. F. Dale in his *Fox-hunting in the Shires*, and together with the other Northamptonshire hunts by Mr. Christopher Markham in the *Victoria County History*.

The Pytchley country, one of the finest in England, comprises the whole of the north-west of Northamptonshire, stretching as it does from the Welland to the South Nene, and from the Avon to the Ise, though Rockingham Forest, say from Wansford to Kettering, is now hunted by a separate pack, the Woodland Pytchley, whose kennels are at Brigstock. This pack was first established in the seventies of the last century; before this time the original pack had hunted the open country during the first half of the season and the woodlands during the second. The Woodland pack still retains one symbol of its ancient

[1] The porch by Inigo Jones is now at Glendon Hall near Rothwell.

allegiance, in the fact that its master is nominated by the Master of the Pytchley.

Before 1750 fox-hunting was sporadic and unsystematic, but at that period the history of modern hunting may be said to begin. It was then that the redoubtable Meynell[1] put the Quorn upon a regular footing and that the first Earl Spencer founded the Pytchley. Two sets of early Chase Books, from which Mr. Markham has printed some interesting extracts, are preserved at Althorp. The first Earl Spencer was also the founder of the Pytchley Club at the Old Hall, as the Isham manor-house was called, and in the long line of masters who succeeded him, most of them by the way importations to the county, may be mentioned John Warde (1798–1809), who " rode twenty-two stone and liked big hounds," Lord Althorp (at one time Chancellor of the Exchequer and finally third Earl Spencer), Sir Charles Knightley (1819), Squire Osbaldeston (1827–1834), Tom Smith (1840), Col. Anstruther Thomson, and the fifth Earl Spencer.

The name of Sir Charles Knightley of Fawsley is still revered in Northamptonshire. His famous leap we have already mentioned, but he only held the mastership for twelve months and then devoted himself to politics, county business, agriculture, and gardening. " To sit with an old friend over a bottle of old port," wrote one who knew him well,[2] " that for many years had been mellowing in the Fawsley cellars, and to talk over old Pytchley days was a treat in which the veteran sportsman greatly delighted." For in those far-off days champagne and the impatient cigarette had not yet superseded such agreeable prolixities.

Of Mr. Smith, " the other Tom Smith " as he was called to distinguish him from the famous T. Assheton Smith, the founder of the Tedworth Hunt, Mr. Dale tells an amusing story. He arranged to begin work by a day's cub-hunting in Sywell Wood

[1] It was Mr. Meynell who first took fox-hunting in hand and out of a Squireen's exercise made it a national sport.—*T. F. Dale.*

[2] H. O. Nethercote, *The Pytchley Hunt.*

at the end of October, but the Hunt servants, who had been spoilt by the extravagant *régime* of his predecessor, were refractory, and refused to turn out. However, he secured the services of a couple of subordinates, "and filled his pockets with bread and biscuit to throw to the hounds on their way to the covert." As he was riding off "with his horn in his hand he met the malcontents, when" one of them "said: 'Why, surely you are not going to hunt them? You can't know them nor they you.' 'Never mind,' was the reply; 'they'll know me as well as they know you in an hour or two.' The new Master trotted away, and the whole village assembled to discuss the situation with the recalcitrant servants, who prophesied the ignominious return of the Master without a single hound. But Mr. Smith hunted a fox in Sywell Wood for two hours, marked him to ground and brought every hound home. . . . After two seasons he resigned, though the farmers and yeomen of the hunt signed a letter of regret and stated that the country had never been hunted more satisfactorily."

It was during the mastership of Col. Anstruther Thomson that the famous Waterloo run (February 2nd, 1866) took place. It gets its name from the Waterloo Gorse, a covert planted about 1817 a few miles distant from Market Harborough. The meet was at Arthingworth, a village to the west of Rothwell. The hounds found in the gorse and ran their fox across the Welland as far as Keythorpe in Leicestershire, a point of eighteen miles in a straight line, but about twenty-five as it was run, in three hours forty-five minutes. The hounds were got back to the Welland at Medbourne Station by 5.30, having probably changed their fox two or three times. The Master got them home to their kennels at Brixworth about ten, sat down to dinner at Lamport Hall by eleven, and then drove off eleven miles to the Hunt Ball at Market Harborough—a pretty good day's work. Colonel Anstruther Thomson, it should be said, hunted the hounds himself, and after this we are not surprised to hear from Mr. Dale that the five seasons during

which he held the Mastership passed all too quickly for the members of the hunt.

The late Lord Spencer held the Mastership for three periods, 1862–64, 1874–78, and 1890–94, and there is no doubt that such a position should be filled where possible by a resident landowner, who can rally round him the support of all classes. This Lord Spencer did, and the tradition was maintained by Lord Annaly of Holdenby, whose term of office lasted from 1902 to 1913. Then came Sir Charles Lowther, and then in 1918 Colonel Walter Faber.

The Fitzwilliam is a border pack as far as our county is concerned. Its country stretches from Peterborough to Huntingdon, but comes as far west as the Nene valley, and includes the line from Elton and Warmington by Ashton Wold, Barnwell Wold and Lilford Park to Thrapston and Raunds. The pack was established at Milton Park in 1769, and after having been kept up by the family for over a century became a subscription pack in 1865. "Like all our famous family packs," writes Mr. Dale, it "has a marked character of its own. It seems as though the notable men who have had to do with these great kennels had given to the race of hounds an individuality of their own. The Belvoir, the Brocklesby, the Badminton, the Fitzwilliam, the Warwickshire are to a certain extent akin, but typical hounds from each kennel have an unmistakable stamp. Thus, the long, beautiful, springy neck, the combination of lightness and strength, and the large but not heavy and very intelligent head of the Fitzwilliam hounds are notable. Nor do I think it would be possible to mistake a Fitzwilliam hound whenever you saw him."

The Fitzwilliam is, of course, not such a fast country as those to the west and north-west of it. There is plenty of hill and dale between the Nene and Ermine Street, but further east you approach the great level of the Fens, and "if," says Mowbray Morris, " foxes put their heads that way, as they often do, especially from Holme Wood, you may as well turn yours homeward ; for there is little to be done there, unless

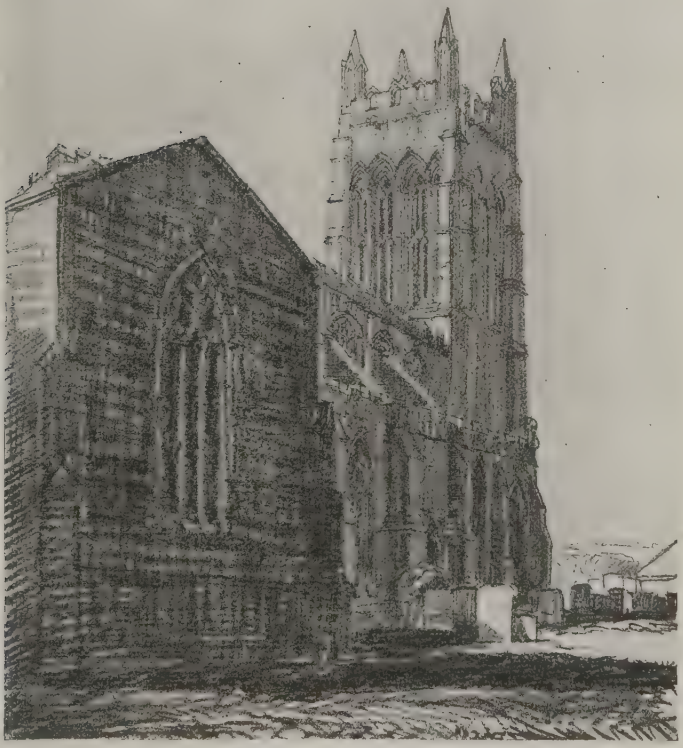
your nag be web-footed." For the rest there is plenty of wood, and plenty of plough, of both of which we have seen something in the uplands east of Stanwick and Higham Ferrers.

But here we are trespassing upon the Oakley country, which comes as far north as the line of the Nene between Northampton and Higham—in fact, till this river bends unmistakably northwards. The Oakley, however, is essentially a Bedfordshire pack, and formerly belonged to the Duke of Bedford. In modern times, the most famous name connected with the hunt is that of Mr. Robert Arkwright, who hunted the whole of the Oakley country for a quarter of a century, and then divided it with Mr. Macan. Bedford, Bletchley, and Sharnbrook are good centres for this pack, but they are out of our district. We may therefore pass on to the remaining Northamptonshire pack—the Grafton, which hunts the south-east of the county.

At Blakesley and Towcester we found ourselves well in the Grafton country, but I regret to say that we were unable to explore the forests of Whittlewood and Salcey, the former lying to the south-west and the latter to the north-east of Watling Street. Northamptonshire here projects in what would now be called a salient into Buckinghamshire, and here it would have been both pleasant and proper to visit the historic villages of Paulerspury and Grafton Regis, and to have searched out the venerable tree beneath which Edward IV., while hunting the stag long before the days of the Grafton pack, was captivated by the fair widow of Sir John Grey, who had fallen on the Lancastrian side at St. Albans. Since those days both forests have been greatly reduced in size, and if any stags still remain they are only to be found in enclosures, such as the park of Whittlebury Lodge. This house lies high amidst sylvan surroundings of great charm, as years ago, long before this book was thought of, when riding from Buckingham to Towcester I discovered for myself.

The Duke of Grafton's house is Wakefield Lodge, on the other side of the forest to the east, and it is from him that the

hunt takes its name. Founded by the third Duke about 1750, the pack long had a character of its own, " round in their bodies, very stout, but wild as hawks "—in fact, the very sort to bring



Whissendine Church.

down a fox in the woodlands. Even as late as 1833 they continued to be very wild and inclined to chase the deer which then ranged at will in the forest. Mr. Markham tells the following

story of Charles Carter, who became huntsman in that year : " One day they (the hounds) broke away from their fox and pursued and killed several deer. Carter rode down the ride blowing his horn, and aided by his whips gradually got his pack together. Clark, the royal keeper, came up much distressed saying ' You will kill all my deer.' ' My dear fellow,' replied Carter, ' I can't help it. I have hounds out to-day which will run at anything from an earwig to an elephant.' " Since 1891 the kennels have been at Paulerspury.

If the Oakley and the Grafton are to be classed as " Provincial," with the Cottesmore we come back once more to " The Shires." We have seen something of the country in our excursions from Stamford and Oakham—most of it open and undulating with low, well-kept fences, and rising on the west towards Knossington, Cold Overton and Whissendine to nearly 600 feet. The coverts are not too frequent, but the valley of the Gwash is well wooded, and the extensive parks of Exton and Normanton add much to its amenities. The heavier and more deeply wooded side round Stretton and Clipsham on the Lincolnshire border we have not been able to explore, but these extensive woodlands are said to be full of foxes, and to afford plenty of sport for those whose interest lies in the science of the chase rather than in the pace of the pursuit. The neighbouring hunt on this side is the Belvoir, and into its territories, I again quote from Mr. Dale, the Cottesmore " not seldom take back a travelling fox that has been driven over the border by the Duke of Rutland's pack. The going is often heavy, and, as the fenland is approached, the man whose horse will not face the big dykes is apt to be left behind. . . . The scent in this part of the country varies a good deal. At times hounds can run very fast and at others they have to work for every foot of ground they cover. When scent is such that hounds can go fast, horses are often reduced to a very steady pace by fields of holding plough or deep woodland rides. Thus the man who goes out simply for a gallop will not as a rule choose this side of the Cottesmore."

The hunt takes its name from the village of Cottesmore, where the kennels were formerly situated. They have now been moved to the neighbouring village of Ashwell. It is pre-eminently with the names of Noel and Lowther that this pack is associated. Thomas Noel, grandson of the third Viscount Campden and the author of one of the first books ever published on the subject, kept hounds (at Exton ?) from 1728 to the year of his death, 1788, and in the latter year the pack was set up on the modern system by Sir William Lowther, afterwards first Earl of Lonsdale, whose long reign lasted, with a short break, to 1842. The present Earl, who is a regular follower of the hounds, has a house at Barleythorpe between Oakham and Langham (p. 171).

And now let this chapter conclude with a tribute to all the good and gallant riders who have galloped over these pleasant English fields, and who to save the land they loved have since galloped over other fields in other lands. For many of them the gallop was their last, but they have left a name behind them, and they would tell you that there can be no finer school for life than the hunting field.

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
RICHARD CLAY AND SONS, LIMITED,
BRUNSWICK STREET, STAMFORD STREET, S.E. 1,
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